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# ISRAEL AND AFRICA

Joel Peters

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## The Problematic Friendship

*By*

**Joel Peters**

*Department of Politics, University of Reading*

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## Contents

Tables	vii
Preface	ix
1. Israel and Africa: The Early Years	1
2. Africa and the Arab-Israeli Conflict before the Yom Kippur War	21
3. Explaining the Break	43
4. The Abandoned Friendship: Relations in the Absence of Formal Ties, 1974-77	63
5. Africa and the Peace Process, 1978-81	85
6. The Quest for Recognition: Israel and Africa, 1981-89	113
7. The Ultimate Constraint ? Israel's Relations with South Africa	147
Conclusion	177
Bibliography	187
Index	205

# Tables

1.1 Cooperation agreements between Israel and African states	5
1.2 Israel's trade with Black Africa, 1967-73	12
2.1 Dates of breaking off diplomatic relations	37
4.1 Israeli experts working in Africa, 1973	65
4.2 Israeli experts working in Africa, 1974-77	66
4.3 African trainees in Israel, 1975-77	67
4.4 Israel's exports to Africa, 1973-77	69
4.5 Israel's imports from Africa, 1973-77	70
4.6 Black African voting on 'Zionism is Racism' Resolution	77
5.1 Israel's exports to Africa, 1977-81	94
5.2 Israeli experts working in Africa, 1977-81	95
5.3 African attending courses run by Israel, 1978-81	96
6.1 Dates of resumption of relations with Israel, 1982-89	140
7:1 Israel's trade with South Africa, 1973-85	154



For my Mother and  
In loving memory of my Father

Once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I  
wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans.

(Theodore Herzl, *Die Alteneuland*, 1902)

I am prouder of Israel's International Cooperation programme and  
of the technical aid we gave to the people of Africa than I am of  
any other single project we have ever undertaken.

(Golda Meir, *My Life*, 1975)

## Preface

Israel's relations with Africa began over thirty years ago with achievement of independence by the African states. In many cases, contacts were established with African leaders even before decolonization. No sooner had Ghana become independent in 1957, than Israel opened its first embassy in Africa. In the ensuing years, Israel befriended the new African states, creating an extensive network of relations on the continent. The 1960s were a period in Israeli-African relations characterized by a spirit of friendship and cooperation. Israel succeeded in establishing relations with thirty-three states and signed cooperation treaties with twenty-two of them. A series of visits by both sides helped consolidate the growing relationship. Jerusalem soon became a regular and important stop on the diplomatic itineraries of African leaders.

The most prominent aspect of Israeli African relations during these years was the development of the Israeli aid programme. Israel sent hundreds of experts to work on a variety of projects in Africa. Its efforts were not confined to a few countries; Israelis were to be found throughout the continent. Israel soon became a much sought after donor of aid in Africa, with requests for training far outstripping the country's limited resources. Through its activities in Africa, Israel gained friendship and a positive image in the world. In short, Israel was dramatically catapulted out of its diplomatic isolation.

This friendship proved to be shortlived. Like Israel, the Arabs also sought to maximize their influence in Africa. Africa quickly became a diplomatic battleground between Israel and Arabs for political support. After Israel's victory in the Six Day War in June 1967, the Africans became increasingly critical of Israel and supportive of the Arab cause. The steady decline in Israel's position in Africa reached its low point during the Yom Kippur War in October 1973 when the African states, in rapid succession, rushed to renounce their friendship with Israel and broke off diplomatic relations. By the end of the war, only four states had not joined the bandwagon.

The severing of diplomatic relations did not signify a complete Israeli disengagement from Africa. Although the break resulted in the immediate withdrawal of the aid programmes, a new set of profitable commercial links were developed in their stead. At the political level, however, contacts were sporadic and of little consequence. For several years, there was an absence of any systematic policy making in Jerusalem toward relations with Africa. Israel made

little attempt to restore its former position on the continent. Likewise for the Africans the question of relations with Israel ceased to be an important issue.

This situation prevailed until the dramatic visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem in November 1977 and the start of the peace process between Israel and Egypt. Although nearly all the African states had broken off diplomatic relations, by no means were all of them equally committed to the Arab cause. The fact that Egypt had decided to make peace with Israel led to many calls in Africa for the resumption of diplomatic relations. Israel, for its part, was eager to capitalize on the peace with Egypt to escape from its diplomatic isolation. As in the 1960s, Africa was again perceived as central in this task.

At the start of the 1980s, Israel launched a concerted diplomatic campaign aimed at restoring its former ties in Africa. It achieved its initial success in May 1982 when Zaire became the first African state to reestablish diplomatic relations. This move was heralded as a major breakthrough which would pave the way for other states to take similar action. The expected mass resumption of relations failed to materialize. Israel had to wait another year for the next country, Liberia, to renew relations. By the end of the decade only eight states had decided to upgrade the level of their ties and restore relations with Israel. While many states were willing to enter into a political dialogue, for the majority, the political and economic benefits to be derived from restoring relations did not outweigh the costs involved.

The signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979 led to widespread reports that the majority of the African states would decide to reestablish diplomatic relations with Israel. The general expectation was that once one or two states restored ties the rest would quickly follow, mirroring the pattern in which relations were originally severed in 1973. Close and careful analysis of Israeli African relations suggests that the basis for this speculation was more apparent than real. Such predictions ignored the changes in the politics of the Middle East and Africa since 1973, the difficulties Israel faces in its relations in Africa and the political constraints on the African states. While the African states broke off relations in response to external and regional factors, the reappraisal of those ties has been dictated primarily by internal needs and considerations. The prospects of a mass resumption of relations were extremely remote.

This book examines the changing nature and the main components of Israel's relations with Africa. It concentrates on the political dimension of Israeli African relations. It does not attempt to evaluate

the operational aspects or the applicability of the Israeli aid programmes in Africa. Nor does it itemize the many commercial links and enterprises established by Israeli companies in Africa. Instead the primary emphasis of the analysis is on the changing views of the African states toward the Arab-Israeli conflict and their differing positions on relations with Israel. An important caveat must be entered at the outset. Throughout this book, the terms 'Black African' and 'African' are used interchangeably. They are used as shorthand to refer to the states of sub-Saharan Africa which are members of the OAU but are not members of the Arab League. At times, 'Black African' is preferred in order to emphasize the differences between those states and the Arab states of North Africa. This distinction is made simply to facilitate understanding. In no way does it imply that the region's population is exclusively black or that the North African Arab states are not an integral part of the African continent.

Chapter One reviews the early years of Israel's relations in Africa up to 1973. It highlights the main areas of interaction and the extensive network of ties that were developed during this period. The views of the African states toward the Arab-Israeli conflict before 1973 are examined in Chapter Two. The chapter shows how, after the Six day War of June 1967, the position of the Africans evolved steadily into one of support for Egypt and the Arab cause. Chapter Three evaluates the reasons why, after the initial achievements of its African policy, the African states, en masse, renounced their friendship with Israel and broke off diplomatic relations. The ways in which relations were developed in the absence of formal ties are detailed in Chapter Four. The differing attitudes of the African states toward the Arab-Israeli conflict after the Yom Kippur War are also considered, while, in Chapter Five, the African response to the peace process between Israel and Egypt is analysed in depth. The study focusses on the means Israel has employed to reestablish a diplomatic presence in Africa, the success of its policies and the setbacks it has encountered. It examines the obstacles Israel has faced in its efforts to redevelop relations in the 1980s and the responsiveness of the Africans to Israel's search for diplomatic partners. Chapter Six details the reasons why Zaire, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Togo, Kenya and the Central African Republic decided to reestablish relations and the nature of the ties that have been developed with these countries. Because no inquiry of Israeli African relations would be complete without reference to Israel's ties with South Africa, Chapter Seven addresses this issue. It does not, however, set out to present a complete coverage of this relationship; such a task warrants a separ-

ate full-length study. Rather the aim is limited to outlining the main developments between Israel and South Africa in the context of an assessment of the impact of this critical relationship on Israel's ties with the Black African nations. The book concludes with an evaluation of Israel's aims and policies in Africa and a discussion of the reasons why the Africans have been interested in resuming a political dialogue with Israel.



This book began as my doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford. In the course of writing the thesis and the subsequent redrafting it for publication, I have incurred many obligations. Space nor words allow me to fully acknowledge or adequately convey my thanks to those who have helped me along the way.

First, I would like to record my gratitude to the former Warden, Sir Raymond Carr, the Fellows and all the staff of St. Antony's College. During my years as a student at Oxford, St Antony's became a second home. The memories are very special. I had the good fortune to have been supervised by Mr Anthony Kirk-Greene whose constant encouragement, guidance and example was invaluable. Part of the doctorate was written whilst I was a visiting scholar at the African Studies Center and the Center for International and Strategic Affairs (CISA) at the University of California, Los Angeles. I would like to thank everyone associated with the two centres who went out of their way to ensure that my stay there was so successful. In particular, I wish to thank Professors Michael Intriligator, the director of CISA, Michael Lofchie, the director of the African Studies Center, Richard Sklar and Steven Spiegel for all their encouragement and support.

A Lady Davis Fellowship allowed me to spend two years in the Department of International Relations at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem where this book was completed. My special thanks are due to Tova Wilk, the secretary of the Lady Davis Fellowship Trust, for all her help during my stay in Jerusalem. I wish to thank everybody in the Department of International Relations for the warmth, hospitality and friendship extended to me during those two years. I have benefitted greatly from their advice and help. Special thanks go to Bruce Hurwitz, for his advice and helping me see the light, and to Yitzhak Klein for his support and encouragement during the hard times and his willingness to share ideas with me. I would also like to thank Glen Segell, my research assistant, who cheerfully responded to my seemingly endless requests for more material.

The Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace elected me as a visiting research fellow for the academic year 1988-89. I am grateful for the support and the interest of the Institute in my work. My warmest thanks are due to Cecile Panzer and all the librarians of the Truman Institute for their invaluable assistance and for the warm welcome extended during my many research trips to Jerusalem. This book could not have been written without them. Hanan Aynor, a former head of the Africa Department in the Israeli foreign ministry, now at the Truman Institute, was always happy to discuss my work and share his knowledge with me. Above all, I owe a special personal and intellectual debt to Professor Naomi Chazan who has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. Her advice, support and interest in my work over the years has frequently gone beyond the normal call of duty.

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This book has been written at a time when many African states have been reassessing their ties with Israel. Its aim is to contribute to a greater understanding of the realities of, and the recent developments in, Israeli African relations in the hope that it may lead to a clearer discussion and more realistic appraisal of the nature, quality, and future direction of Israel's relations with Africa. Any credit it may receive I would like to share with my friends. Its faults, as always, are mine alone.



## Israel and Africa: the Early Years

Israel first became interested in developing relations in Africa in 1956, following its exclusion from the First All Afro-Asian conference which had met the previous year in Bandung. The early years of Israeli foreign policy were dominated by two issues, the search for peace and security and the development of its economy. In the pursuit of these objectives the main focus of Israel's diplomatic efforts had centred around the cultivation of close and friendly ties with Europe and North America. Africa, and the Third World in general had figured only marginally in the thoughts of Israel's leaders.

The decision of the participants of the Bandung Conference to exclude Israel from the proceedings, and the support expressed for the 'Arab people of Palestine' came as a shock and a painful blow to Israel.<sup>1</sup> The failure to be accepted by the non-aligned group of new nations was a severe setback for Israel and revealed its weakness in the Third World. One high-ranking Israeli official went so far as to describe it, at the time, as not only a diplomatic setback but as the greatest trauma the Israeli foreign ministry had ever suffered.<sup>2</sup> The shortcomings of having failed to develop a coherent policy toward the Third World now became clearly evident to Israel's leaders. In the middle of 1956, a reevaluation of Israel's basic policy assumptions was carried out to ensure that the future direction of the state's foreign policy would be geared to facts and not just hopes. Steps were immediately undertaken to correct its policy in Asia. It was at this point that Israel decided to expand the level of its contacts and develop relations with Africa.

When the proposal to partition Palestine into two separate independent states, one Jewish and one Arab, was presented to the United Nations in November 1947, only two African states had been represented in the General Assembly and participated in the vote. Liberia voted for the resolution, while Ethiopia, in order to avoid friction with her Arab neighbours to the north, abstained. In February 1949, Liberia became only the third country to formally recognize the new state of Israel. Relations and contacts between Israel and these two African states were on the whole limited. It was not until August 1957 that Israel and Liberia exchanged diplomatic ambassadors – four months after Israel had opened its first African embassy in Accra. Although Israel opened up a consulate in Addis Ababa in 1956,

Ethiopia did not officially grant Israel *de jure* recognition until October 1961 and did not exchange ambassadors until the following year.

Learning from its past mistakes in Asia, Israel began to court the friendship of African political leaders even before decolonization. An outstanding example of this was in Ghana, where contacts were established between Ghanaian and Israeli leaders at international socialist conferences and at the meetings of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. As a result of these meetings, Israel opened a consulate in Accra in 1956, several months before Ghana gained independence. When Ghana became an independent in March 1957, Israel immediately upgraded its consulate to an embassy and sent Ehud Avriel to become its first ambassador in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Four months later Israel opened its second embassy in Monrovia.

With the rapid achievement of independence in Africa, Israel was quick to recognize and immediately establish diplomatic relations with the new states. In 1959, it opened an embassy in Conakry, Guinea. Between 1960-1961 ties were expanded to include Zaire, Mali, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Nigeria. It soon became a goal for Israel to establish its presence through diplomatic representation in every new African state. By the end of 1962 the number of Israeli embassies in Africa had risen to twenty-two. In 1972, at the height of its representation on the continent, Israel maintained diplomatic ties with thirty-two states in Africa. The only two African states which did not enter into diplomatic relations with Israel were Somalia and Mauritania, both of whom were later to join the Arab League. Aside from the former colonial powers, Israel established one of the largest network of diplomatic missions in Africa.

Reciprocally, many African states opened up embassies in Israel. It was of particular significance that, of the eleven African embassies maintained in Israel, ten were opened in Jerusalem. This accounted for nearly half of all the embassies in the city.<sup>4</sup> Many states, including the United States, had refused to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and instead, had decided to locate their embassies in Tel Aviv. The recognition of Israel's claim to Jerusalem was an indication of the friendship and the level of support that many African states were prepared to demonstrate for Israel. In addition, Ethiopia, which never opened an embassy in Israel, maintained a consulate in Jerusalem.

The recognition of the new states and the opening of embassies was only one facet of the developing relationship between Israel and Africa. A series of visits by Israeli leaders to Africa helped consolidate

the growing friendship. At the beginning of 1958 Golda Meir, Israel's foreign minister, made her first trip to Africa visiting Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast. In the next five years she was to make four more visits to Africa. In 1962 President Yitzhak Ben Zvi embarked on a five nation tour of West Africa, and four years later Prime Minister Levi Eshkol made an even more extensive trip visiting Senegal, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Zaire, Uganda and Liberia. At many of the independence celebrations in Africa, Israel was represented by senior government officials. Golda Meir herself attended the independence celebrations of Cameroon and Nigeria in October 1960 and Zambia in October 1964.<sup>5</sup> The high level representation of the Israeli delegations was appreciated by the new African states and testified to the importance that Israel attached to its diplomatic efforts in Africa.

African leaders, for their part, became regular visitors to Israel. Jerusalem soon became an important stop on the diplomatic itineraries of the African Presidents. Nearly every friendly African leader visited Israel at least once. By 1965 the heads of state of the CAR, Chad, the Congo, Dahomey, Gabon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Uganda and Upper Volta had visited Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> Hardly a week passed without the visit of an official delegation from an African country. These visits were highly valued by the Africans who often left Israel highly enthused. The Secretary-General of the Ghana's trade union movement, John Tettegah, declared after a visit to Israel in 1957 'Israel has given me more in eight days than I could obtain from two years in a British university.'<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Tom Mboya, the Kenyan trade unionist commented: 'Any African who tours Israel cannot fail to be impressed by the achievements made in such a short time from poor soil and with so few natural resources. We all tended to come away most excited and eager to return to our countries and repeat all those experiments.'<sup>8</sup>

The most prominent aspect of the Israel-African relationship, and the one which received the most attention and publicity was Israel's aid and cooperation programme. From its modest origins, Israel's aid programme rapidly developed to become a major and integral part of its relations with African states and with the Third World in general. Israel's cooperation programme began in Asia. When Israel and Burma exchanged diplomatic relations in 1953, the Israeli government extended the offer of a few technical assistance projects to Burma. From Asia, the programmes spread to Africa. In 1957, in response to a request by Nkrumah, Israel embarked on a number of technical assistance projects in Ghana. With Israel's experience and

expertise gained from its models of agricultural settlements, the Kibbutzim and Moshavim, serving as a guide, Israel began to provide technical assistance in city planning, irrigation and water development, cooperative farming and marketing, and consumer cooperatives.

As relations with Africa developed the size and scope of the cooperation programme rapidly expanded. Within a few years no less than twenty-three official or quasi-official Israeli institutions had become involved in the programme and a separate department in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Division for International Cooperation (the Mashav) was formed to administer the programme. Every country that entered into diplomatic relations with Israel benefited from one or more of the various projects. In conjunction with these programmes, Israel also signed a number of cooperation treaties with twenty-two African states. (See Table 1.) Israel rapidly became one of the most sought after donors of aid in Africa. Requests for training and the dispatching of experts far outstripped the country's limited resources. Israel had more experts working abroad in proportion to its population than many advanced industrialized countries. In 1964 the Israeli ratio of experts to total population (0.028 per cent) was almost twice that of all the OECD countries combined (0.015 per cent).<sup>9</sup> The geographic distribution of Israel's assistance programmes also illustrates clearly the dominant position of Africa in Israeli foreign policy toward the Third World. During the fifteen years from when the projects were first initiated in Africa to the breaking of diplomatic relations in 1973, 3,017 Israeli experts worked on short or long term projects in Africa, constituting nearly two thirds of all its experts that were sent to the Third World.

The main focus of the technical assistance projects was in agriculture. Israel's extraordinary agricultural development and her expertise in adapting agricultural technology to overcome adverse conditions held a special attraction for the African states and it was here that Israel made its greatest impact in Africa. Israel's projects in this area can be divided into four separate categories. Israel was involved in: i) specialized projects, which involved the introduction of new technology and crops; ii) the establishing of agricultural farms and training centres; iii) the organization of specific rural institutions; and iv) the planning of comprehensive regional and rural development projects. Israeli experts were active in numerous and various agricultural projects in Africa. In Cameroon, for example, Israel helped to create a vegetable growing and marketing pro-

gramme, in Zaire a poultry farm was established, in Senegal a bee-raising programme was instituted and in Uganda experimental

**TABLE 1.1: Cooperation Agreements Between Israel and African States**

State	Date of Agreement	
Mali	24	November 1960
Upper Volta	11	June 1961
Madagascar	27	August 1961
Dahomey	28	September 1961
Ivory Coast	2	June 1962
Gabon	15	May 1962
Ghana	25	May 1962
Central African Republic	13	June 1962
Liberia	25	June 1962
Rwanda	20	October 1962
Cameroon	24	October 1962
Gambia	16	December 1962
Burundi	20	December 1962
Niger	11	January 1963
Tanzania	29	January 1963
Uganda	4	February 1963
Togo	12	April 1964
Chad	7	October 1964
Sierra Leone	22	August 1965
Kenya	25	February 1966
Malawi	31	May 1968

Source: Division of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, *Israel's Programme of International Cooperation*, 1970.

citrus farms were set up. Israel was also engaged in a variety of other fields; medicine and public health, education, construction and building, youth organizations, social work and community development. The projects ranged from pilot farms and agricultural schools at Bouke in the Ivory Coast; irrigation experiments in the Ivory Coast and Tanzania; measures against tropical diseases in Liberia, Malawi and Rwanda; the training of national youth services in the Central



African Republic, Kenya and Uganda; the modernization of post and telecommunications in Ethiopia and the setting up national lotteries in Dahomey, the Central African Republic and Togo.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the dispatching of Israeli experts to work on projects in Africa, African students arrived in Israel to receive training on a number of short-term projects. Israel's training programme began in 1958 with a course on cooperative enterprise, held in the lecture rooms of the Histadrut's Workers College in Tel Aviv. After a number of these ad hoc seminars, the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies was founded by the Histadrut. Its courses were designed for trade unionists and government officials in the areas of development, labour and cooperation. By the end of 1973, 1,529 Africans had graduated from the courses at the Afro-Asian Institute. Many returned to Africa to become future leaders of their trade union movements and leading politicians in their respective countries.<sup>11</sup>

The Afro-Asian Institute was only one of a number of centres established to train students from the Third World. Of the others the most notable was the Mt Carmel International Training Centre for Community Services in Haifa. The Centre's main concern is to help women from developing countries acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute to the development of their country. Its courses focus on health and nutrition, adult education and literacy, emphasizing the community development approach. From 1962 to 1973, 1,034 trainees from thirty-four African countries completed courses at the Centre. In addition to these two institutions, African students attended courses run by the Centre for International Cooperation, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Settlement Study Centre in Rehovot, the Volcani Institute for Agricultural Research and the Hebrew University Medical School in Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> By 1973, out of 16,352 students from the Third World who had participated on these courses in Israel, nearly half, 7,119, were from Africa.<sup>13</sup>

An important area of cooperation, though one that attracted less attention than the technical assistance programmes, was military assistance. Some writers have concluded that it was here, rather than by the agricultural programmes that Israel made its most significant mark in Africa.<sup>14</sup> Israel's military assistance to Africa needs to be sub-divided into two separate and distinct categories: first, the direct military training of African personnel in the army, air force and navy; and second the establishment of paramilitary and youth organizations modelled on the Israeli Nahal and Gadna organizations.<sup>15</sup> Again, Israeli military advisers were to be found throughout Africa. By 1966 Israel was training the armed forces of Ethiopia, Ghana,

Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. In Dahomey, Madagascar and the Upper Volta assistance was rendered in the training of the police forces. In the second category of military aid, Israel had set up Nahal settlements and Gadna groups in seventeen African states; Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Dahomey, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Upper Volta, Zambia and Zaire.<sup>16</sup>

Israel rationalized the level of its military assistance to Africa by arguing that if it did not respond to requests for aid in this sphere then the Arab countries, notably Egypt, would do so instead. While this rational can partially explain its motives, two rather more compelling explanations need to be advanced. Right from the start of its contacts with African states, Israel was aware of the importance of trying to befriend individuals who were in positions of power or were likely to play an important and influential role in the future. Given the extensive role played by the military in African politics, this principle led to the training of African officers from an early stage and in some cases even before these countries had gained their independence. For example, among the African officers who received their military training in Israel were Joseph Mobutu and Idi Amin, both of whom were later to take power in their respective countries. The first airforce pilots from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire were all trained in Israel. On the eve of Kenya's independence, President Kenyatta publicly announced that the first Kenyan pilots had secretly been receiving training in Israel.<sup>17</sup> At the end of the 1966, it was disclosed that nearly 500 Tanzanians had been sent to Israel for military training. Israel was also instrumental in setting up Ghana's navy and establishing a flying school in Accra.

The importance of these contacts proved to be increasingly significant as relations developed. In March 1966 the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* published an article 'The Israelis and the Revolutions in Africa' in which it detailed the close rapport that had been established between Israel and many of the new military leaders.

There is a serious lesson to be learned from these coups, which is that there is nothing in them which will hurt Israel... A look at the new personalities controlling these new states will indicate this: the new leader of Dahomey, General Soglo, visited Israel and became friendly with people from the foreign office and the defence ministry. The same is true for the new President of the Central African Republic, Colonel Bokassa, who visited Israel in 1962; this is also true of the new leader of Upper Volta, Lieutenant Colonel

Lamizana. General Ankrah, the new leader of Ghana, although he did not visit Israel is considered to be a good friend and strong and friendly relations were established between him and the former Israeli ambassador to Ghana, Michael Arnon. Also General Ankrah's partner in the coup, the Commissioner of Police (J.W.K. Hasley), has close ties with Israel. His brother was trained here and he is well known to many here. General Ironsi did not visit Israel but during his days the Commander of the Nigerian forces in the Congo, he established ties with many Israelis and Israel is dear to him.<sup>18</sup>

While the friendships developed between Israel and the military leaders of Africa were clearly of benefit to Israel, Israel's military assistance must also be understood with reference to its geopolitical and geostrategic concerns. Though Israeli military advisers were to be found throughout the continent, the main concentration of Israel's military cooperation was with countries in East Africa. Israel's prime strategic concern focussed on the Horn of Africa. Its main interest there was to prevent the closure of the Straits of Bab el Mandeb and thus ensure the freedom of navigation through the Red Sea for Israeli shipping. The geostrategic importance of this region to Israel led to the development of a close and extensive military relationship with Ethiopia.

Emperor Haile Selassie viewed Ethiopia as a Christian enclave surrounded by hostile Muslim states bent on dismembering his country. Having gained political control of Eritrea in 1952, Ethiopia was engaged in a secessionist struggle with Eritrean rebels seeking independence. Israel shared a common interest with Ethiopia in ensuring that the Eritreans were not successful. Israel saw Eritrean separatism as a potential threat to its strategic interests in the Horn. Fearful that an independent, Muslim, Eritrea might cooperate with other Arab states to close off the Red Sea, Israel began to assist the Ethiopian government. Ethiopian commando units and security personnel were trained by Israel. In addition Israel established a communications network in Eritrea that allowed the Ethiopian military to become more effective in that province. In return for this assistance Israel was allowed to establish naval bases on some of the islands just off the Eritrean coast and the Straits of Bab el Mandeb.<sup>19</sup> By 1966, the size of the Israeli military delegation in Ethiopia had grown to such an extent that it was second in size only to the American military presence in the country.

The cultivation of relations with Ethiopia was also important as part of a broader strategic plan (known as the 'peripheral doctrine') which Israel was developing toward the end of the 1950s. This involved the establishment of an informal alliance of states situated on the periphery of the Middle East which connected Israel in the triangle with Turkey and Iran to the north and Ethiopia to the south. All were non-Arab states located at the margin of the Middle East with a history of enmity with the Arab world. Common to all was the fear of Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic expansion and subversion which threatened the territorial integrity of their countries.<sup>20</sup>

After Ethiopia, the second largest Israeli military presence was in Uganda. Following a visit to Israel in June 1964, Uganda's Minister of Internal Affairs F. K. Onama announced that Uganda, with the assistance of Israel, was going to treble the strength of its army. By 1965, Israel had taken over the role formerly played by Great Britain in training the Ugandan army.<sup>21</sup> Israel was also instrumental in instructing the Ugandan airforce. In return for the training of its army, it was rumoured that Uganda allowed Israel to build secret air bases from which it could launch air strikes against Egypt.<sup>22</sup> Building close ties with Uganda was of particular importance to Israel since Uganda borders Southern Sudan. This allowed Israel to establish a base from which it was able to train and supply the forces of the Southern Sudanese Anya Nya rebels.<sup>23</sup> Israel's involvement in the civil war in Sudan was largely in response to General Numeiry's hostile attitude toward Israel and his support for Egypt. Up until 1972 a Sudanese brigade was stationed along the Suez Canal. Israel had a particular interest in ensuring that the Sudanese army was embroiled in a protracted conflict in the Southern Sudan. The paramount interest of Israel was not so much in helping the Southern Sudanese obtain autonomy or independence, but in maintaining a state of affairs serious enough to draw a substantial part of Sudan's army to the civil war in the South. Ali Mazrui contends that there was also the calculation that this diversion of the Sudanese army to a southern war might in turn necessitate the diversion of part of the Egyptian army to the Northern Sudan.<sup>24</sup> Israel's support for the Anya Nya rebels lasted until 1972 when the rebels' leader Colonel Joseph Lagu agreed to enter into negotiations with General Numeiry to end the civil war.

Israel's military involvement in Africa was not without its setbacks. The attempt to adapt the concept of the Nahal settlements to the African environment turned out to be a resounding failure. Six years after the Nahal programmes were first initiated in Africa not

one new settlement had been established. Misunderstandings concerning the purpose and aim of these programmes led to frustration and bitterness on the part of the Africans. In several instances these units were transformed into wasteful patronage machines or support mechanisms of the regime in power. Often African leaders appeared to be more concerned with utilizing these units to combat political unrest rather than to instigate any long-range social and agrarian transformation of their societies.<sup>25</sup> Israel's close association with many of Africa's leaders also left itself exposed to the vicissitudes of African politics and vulnerable to charges of interference in the internal affairs of African states. When Idi Amin took power in Uganda in 1971, Israel was accused by Milton Obote of aiding Amin in his coup d'état – a suspicion strongly fostered by Amin's close association with and laudatory remarks about Israel. By involving itself in many of the regional conflicts on the continent, Israel managed only to foster a negative image of its presence in Africa. For instance, Israel's support for the secessionist forces in Biafra severely comprised its relations with Nigeria. When, shortly after the war, Abba Eban disclosed the level of Israel's involvement with the Biafran forces, there were calls throughout Nigeria, even by elements that had been traditionally sympathetic to Israel, for a break in diplomatic relations and the expulsion of the Israelis from the country.<sup>26</sup> As time passed, the African states became increasingly more concerned and critical of the military role played by Israel in Africa. In November 1973 a meeting of the African Heads of Missions and OAU representative in Europe issued a statement expressing their concern at the role played by Israel in assisting secessionist movements in Africa.<sup>27</sup>

The final area in which Israel was active in Africa was in the economic and commercial sphere. Starting in Ghana in 1957 Israel established a number of joint commercial and industrial companies. These enterprises were engaged primarily in construction, water resource development and shipping. They consisted of a combination of one of Israel's numerous public or semi-public companies and a local African partner, with the host African government owning the majority of the shares in the company. The Israeli partners in these ventures were not private entrepreneurs but quasi-public corporations in which the Israeli government had an important voice. These joint economic ventures were normally set up for a limited period of time, and the Israeli company undertook to carry out a training programme in order to prepare the local personnel to eventually replace the Israeli staff. Thus, these joint ventures represented a

combination of capital investment, management and training by Israel.<sup>28</sup>

The attraction of these enterprises for the African governments was the opportunity it gave them to gain the benefit of experienced management and training as well as the establishment of industries with a relatively small investment of capital and skilled manpower. They were also of great commercial benefit to Israel, enabling it to enter new markets with a relatively small capital investment under the benevolent protection of the African governments involved. Without them Israeli companies would have had greater difficulty trying to penetrate the domestic markets of the African states. These companies were not always successful. In some cases, the new enterprises were uneconomical, while in others the Israeli partner became unintentionally involved in the internal politics of the country. Nonetheless, most of the joint companies did prove successful financial ventures and contributed to the development of Africa's economic infrastructure. By 1970 only one of these joint ventures was still in existence, the remainder having been turned over to full African control. Amongst the projects completed were Parliament buildings in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, international airports in Ghana and Uganda, hotels in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya and several thousand miles of roads throughout the continent.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Israeli companies such as Mayer Brothers and Federman were also active in a purely private and commercial capacity. Solel Boneh, which was a partner in several of the joint companies, also operated in Africa as an expatriate construction company and established overseas branches in eight states.

An additional aspect of commercial activity was the growth in trade between Israel and the African continent. Prior to 1956, Israel's trade with Africa was very small. Egypt's prevention of ships bound for Israel to pass freely through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal had severely restricted Israel's access to the African markets. As a consequence of the Suez war, the Gulf of Aqaba was opened to Israeli shipping, allowing the possibility of developing trade with both Africa and Asia. In the ensuing years trade between Israel and Africa grew steadily. Israel exported food products, clothing, medicine, agricultural machinery, electronic equipment and office supplies. In exchange Israel imported mainly primary products from Africa, including industrial diamonds from the Central African Republic and Zaire, uranium from Gabon and Zaire and beef from Ethiopia and Kenya.<sup>30</sup> While trade grew steadily each year, the total volume of exports and imports was generally low and never counted for more



than 3 per cent of Israel's overall trade. The European market remained the main focus for both Israel and Africa. When the African states broke off diplomatic relations in 1973 the total value of trade in that year amounted to less than \$60 million. (See Table 2)

**TABLE 1.2: Israel's Trade with Black Africa, 1967-73. (\$US million)**

	Exports	Imports
1967	20.4	23.8
1968	22.4	24.8
1969	26.1	25.4
1970	30.5	20.0
1971	38.0	17.1
1972	37.4	20.4
1973	30.2	24.6

Source: *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (1970-74), Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.

The establishing of friendly relations with the new African states became for Israel not only a challenge, born out of political necessity but also an opportunity for it to normalize its international position. In the course of a few years, its relations on the African continent were to transform dramatically its standing in the international community. Through its activities in Africa, Israel gained friendship, prestige and a positive image in the world. As the *New York Times* noted: 'From a scribbled word in a black notebook, the Israeli government has built an aid to Africa program that has broken some political barriers and made Israel possibly the most welcome strangers in Africa.'<sup>31</sup> The feeling of isolation and rejection which followed its exclusion from the Bandung Conference soon became a hazy and distant memory. Through the support and strong backing of the African states, Israeli delegates were elected, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, to executive-administrative posts as representatives of the Afro-Asian world. Even Israel's critics were forced to acknowledge the success of its policies in Africa:

It is difficult to name more than half a dozen developing countries where Israel is not present in one way or another. Technical advisers and physicians, agronomists and military instructors, trade union functionaries and youth organizers are engaged in activity which seems quite peaceful and constructive.<sup>32</sup>

For Israel the benefits gained from this relationship were numerous. The reception and success of its policies in Africa brought about a perceptible strengthening of national self confidence and morale. Arab pressures and propaganda were effectively countered. Diplomatic support was provided at the United Nations and various international and Third World gatherings.

The 1960s are frequently referred to as the honeymoon period in Israeli-African relations. During those years nothing was too good or too much for Africa. As one observer remarked, 'Israel has gone Africa-mad.'<sup>33</sup> From having virtually no history of contacts and relations with the African world, Israel became rapidly transformed into a major actor on the continent. Israelis were to be found working throughout Africa. This transformation is even more remarkable when one considers Israel's size, population and resources and remembers that it, too, was a new state with a developing society and economy. In light of this, it is important to examine why the development of an extensive set of relations became such a high priority in Israeli foreign policy.

Israel's search for close and friendly ties in Africa was motivated by a combination of political, strategic and economic objectives as well as by humanitarian and ideological considerations. Its aims in Africa were described in one official government publication in the following way:

The aim is very generally to achieve a proper blend first of altruistic aspirations the wish to help and second of own legitimate advantage-gaining friends, furthering political information and advancing economic objectives.<sup>34</sup>

From its creation as a new state in May 1948, Israel's leaders were concerned with seeking recognition and legitimacy in the world. Like all states, Israel was interested in establishing a network of relations and friendships in the world. It was particularly interested in being accepted by the new nations of the world, of which it felt a natural part. In the early years of its existence, Israel's leaders were eager to overcome the diplomatic and political isolation that the Arab states were trying to impose. By recognizing the new African states and offering them a variety of aid programmes Israel was seeking, above all, friendship and goodwill. This desire was frequently acknowledged by Israeli leaders. As Golda Meir, during her second tour of Africa, replied to a question regarding Israel's goals in Africa. 'Israel wants

something in return for the cooperation and goodwill it brings to African peoples and governments. This great thing is friendship.' <sup>35</sup>

Israel was also hoping to gain political support from the African states in its struggle with Arab states. In particular, it sought African votes in the United Nations and other international forums. This position was openly acknowledged by the Israeli themselves. 'The African countries are not powerful', *Ha'aretz* commented, 'but their voices are heard in the world and their votes in international institutions are equal in value to those of the most powerful nations.' <sup>36</sup> Occasionally there was even optimism in Jerusalem that the support of the African states for Israel would force the Arabs to accept Israel's right to exist and lead to peace in the region. This was expressed by an official in the Israeli foreign ministry in these terms:

Africa's friendship has banished the spectre of Israel's isolation in the Third World. The vigorous stand taken by African leaders in advocacy of peaceful settlement of conflicts has strengthened Israel's conviction that the states of Africa are able and willing to play a central part in bringing about permanent peace in the Middle East. President Nasser in his 'Philosophy of Revolution' insists that the way to Africa leads through Cairo. Everything today points to the likelihood that the way to Cairo may lead through Africa. <sup>37</sup>

Above all, Israel's principal foreign policy goal has been the maintenance and furthering of the security of the state. Reich argues that the motive behind Israel's policy in Africa was directed primarily by this consideration. In his opinion, 'the desire for friendship cannot be considered an end itself. This desire, as well as Israel's economic, technical, security and well-being.' <sup>38</sup>

While Israel's policy in Africa was undoubtedly motivated by strategic, economic and political objectives, the size and extent of Israel's activities in Africa cannot be fully understood without reference to the humanitarian and altruistic factors. Although this factor receded with time, it was clearly evident in the early formulation of Israel's policy in Africa. The existence of this humanitarian factor meant that Africa was seen more than just as a battleground for political support and votes. Statements by Israeli leaders in relation to their policies in Africa often possessed a semi-spiritual and missionary nature. Writing in 1960, Ben Gurion stated:

Israel has been granted the great historic privilege – which is therefore also a duty – of assisting backward and primitive peoples to improve themselves, develop and advance, thus helping to solve the gravest problem of the 20th century...the problem of the dangerous gap between Asia and Africa on the one hand and Europe and America [and Australia] on the other. <sup>39</sup>

Golda Meir, who as foreign minister was regarded as being the motivating force behind Israel's policy in Africa, expressed a similar missionary tone. 'We did what we did in Africa', she declared, 'not because it was a policy purely of self interest but because it was continuation of our most valuable traditions and an expression of our deeper historic ties.' <sup>40</sup>

What was the appeal of the Israeli link for the Africans? Several reasons that can be forwarded. The African countries, having just emerged from colonial rule and being desperately in need of assistance, responded eagerly and with gratitude to Israel's initiatives. Israel was seen as both a challenge and an inspiration. Yaacov Shimoni saw the African attraction to Israel as 'something connected with nation building', how a state approaches the social problems of independence. What attracted the Africans to Israel was that it too was an emerging state which had created a variety of socio-economic institutions as it had tackled the problems of economic development. <sup>41</sup> Israel's social and economic achievements, the agricultural cooperatives, the Kibbutz and Moshav settlements, the structure of its labour movement and youth organizations were of special interest to the Africans. 'The Israeli model may well prove to be a sort of economic third force', the Tanzanian *Standard* pointed out, 'an alternative differing from the western pattern but certainly far more compatible with free world interests than any communist model.' <sup>42</sup> Julius Nyerere expressed the perception of Israel as an appropriate model for Africa:

Israel is a small country...but it can offer a lot to a country like mine. We can learn a great deal because the problems of Tanganyika are similar to Israel's...What are our problems?...two major tasks: building the nation and changing the face of the land, physically and economically. <sup>43</sup>

Israel's positive image in Africa was enhanced by the calibre of people it sent to work in Africa and the speed with which it responded to requests for aid. The Israelis soon gained a reputation for being

modest, hard-working, informal and well-liked. On the whole, Israel selected only the most highly competent economic and agricultural advisers to work in Africa and their performances were favourably received. Often the contributions of individual Israeli representatives were of particular importance. For example, Ehud Avriel, Israel's first ambassador to Ghana was regarded as the most influential diplomat in Accra and as being responsible for Israel's success in that country.<sup>44</sup>

An additional attraction of Israel was the fact that Israel as a small country posed no threat of economic or political domination. 'You can barely manage to dominate yourself, one African leader confided to an Israeli official.<sup>45</sup> African leaders were anxious to reduce their dependence on the former colonial powers and diversify their foreign, economic and trade relations. On the whole Israel's aid was offered with few political strings. All Israel sought in return was friendship, goodwill and the maintenance of diplomatic relations.

Africans acknowledged this element of political neutrality. 'Accepting aid from Israel, we have no fear of getting involved in a power struggle', noted a Mali official. The President of the Central African Republic told Israeli officials, 'You bring solutions that we can only get from the Soviet Union but without the big shoe.'<sup>46</sup> While the fact that Israel posed no threat was of great appeal to the Africans, some African countries, notably Ghana and Ethiopia, also welcomed Israel's presence as a counter-weight to Egypt's influence in Africa.<sup>47</sup>

As well as the objective interests that existed, Israel and Africa were also seen as being linked by a common bond, arising from the discrimination that both Jews and blacks had suffered over the years. President Leopold Senghor of Senegal expressed this perception:

We black Africans understand both the Arabs and the Israelis, because, together with us they form a triad of suffering peoples. The Jews were persecuted for 2,000 years, the Arabs for three centuries and the blacks since the Renaissance.<sup>48</sup>

David Dacko told Golda Meir that in future both peoples would never be lonely again. 'Because they are weak and victims of oppression', Premier Akintola of Nigeria's Western Region remarked after visiting Israel, 'the Israelis appear exceedingly sympathetic to developing nations.'<sup>49</sup>

Relations with Israel were eagerly sought by African leaders regardless of the ideological orientation and the religious composition of their societies. In socialist-orientated Tanzania, Israel was the only

non-Soviet bloc country which Nyerere turned to for help in establishing the Ujamaa cooperative agricultural settlements. In the capitalist-orientated Ivory Coast, an Israeli firm Mayer Brothers, was involved in the construction of a massive, internationally financed, \$50 million 'African Riviera' tourism development project. Niger, the majority of whose inhabitants were Muslim, opened its embassy in Jerusalem. Relations with Israel were highly valued and appreciated. Israel was regarded as an important and successful contributor to African development.

Israel's achievements and success in Africa in the early period of their relationship are well summed up by Dadou Thiam, the former foreign minister of Senegal. 'By an extremely able diplomacy and by concluding agreements for cooperation and technical assistance, Israel has become to be recognized as a valuable partner for the newly independent states of Africa.'<sup>50</sup> As President Dacko told Golda Meir, 'Israel has contented itself with showing the new African nations its achievements, in helping them overcome their weaknesses and in assisting them in learning. In doing so you [Israel] have conquered black Africa.'<sup>51</sup>

#### Notes

1. For text of the communique see George M. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955* (1956), p. 82.
2. Samuel Decalo, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Third World', *Orbis*, 11, 3, 1967, p. 729.
3. For a discussion of the beginnings of Israel's foreign policy in Africa see Mordechai E. Kreinin 'Israel and Africa: The Early Years' and Ehud Avriel, 'Israel's Beginnings in Africa' in Michael Curtis and Susan A. Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World* (1976), pp. 54-69 and pp. 69-75.
4. The countries which opened embassies in Jerusalem were Central African Republic, Dahomey, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Niger, Congo, Upper Volta and Zaire. See Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (1974), pp. 56-7.
5. Golda Meir, *My Life* (1975), pp. 263-80.
6. Olusola Ojo, *Africa and Israel* (1988), p. 16.
7. Samuel Decalo, 'Israeli Foreign Policy and the Third World', p. 734.
8. Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (1963), pp. 173-4.



9. Leopold Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries: New Approaches to Cooperation* (1967), p. 79.
10. For a comprehensive coverage of Israel's aid programme see the following: Amir, *Israel's Development Cooperation with Africa*, Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries*, Mordechai E. Kreinin, *Israel and Africa: A Study in Technical Cooperation* (1964); Z.Y. Herschlag, and David Horowitz (eds.), *Israel Africa Cooperation Research Project Final Report* (1973); Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa: The Politics of Cooperation: A Study of Foreign Policy and Technical Assistance*, (unpublished Ph.D thesis), University of Pennsylvania, 1970; and Abel Jacob, *The Political Outcomes of Foreign Aid: Israel's Foreign Aid to Africa*, (unpublished Ph.D thesis), University of California, Los Angeles, 1969.
11. Information supplied by Afro-Asian Institute, Tel Aviv.
12. For further information on these training institutes see Moshe Decter, *To Serve, To Teach, To Leave* (1977), pp. 12-31 and Amir, *Israel's Development Cooperation*.
13. Figures compiled from appendices of Shimeon Amir, *Israel's Development Cooperation*.
14. See Abel Jacob, 'Israel's Military Aid to Africa, 1960-66', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9, 2, 1971, pp. 165-89 and Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Terramedia: Themes in Afro-Arab Relations* (1982), pp. 64-66.
15. Nahal (Naor Halutzei Lochem, fighting pioneer youth) combines military service with agricultural training and the pioneering of new settlements. Gadna (Gedudey Naor, youth formations) is a youth organization which combines physical and paramilitary training with scouting and education in civics.
16. Jacob, 'Israel's Military Aid to Africa', pp. 165-6.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
18. *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), 5 March, 1966 quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 171.
19. See Peter Schwab, 'Israel's weakened position on the Horn of Africa', *New Outlook*, 20 April 1978, pp. 22-3, Haggai Erlich, *The Struggle over Eritrea, 1962-1978* (1983), pp. 57-8 and Mitchell G. Bard, 'The Evolution of Israel's Africa Policy', *Middle East Review*, 21, 2, Winter, 1988/89, pp. 23-6.
20. For an account of the periphery doctrine see Michael Bar-Zohar, 'Ben Gurion and the Policy of the Periphery' in Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), *Israel in the Middle East* (1984), pp. 164-71.

21. Jacob, 'Israel's Military Aid to Africa', p. 177.
22. Beshir, *Terramedia*, p. 69. The airport was built by the Israelis, there is no evidence that Israel was to allowed to use its facilities for military purposes.
23. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 69.
24. Colin Legum, 'Israel's Year in Africa: A Study of Secret Diplomacy' in *Africa Contemporary Record, 1972-73* (1973), p. A135. Arthur J. Klinghoffer, 'The Strategy of Aid', *Africa Report*, 17, April 1972, p. 14. *Africa Confidential*, 24 December 1972, pp. 3-4.
25. For a discussion of the implementation of the Nahal and Gadna programmes in West Africa see Z.Y. Herschlag, *Israel Africa Cooperation Research Project Progress Report* (1970), pp. 29-184 and Jacob, 'Israel's Military Aid to Africa', pp. 180-6.
26. Olusola Ojo, 'Nigeria and Israel', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 8, 1, 1986, p. 84.
27. *African and Asian Media Survey: African and Asian Attitudes on the Middle East Conflict* (1975), p. 53.
28. Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries*, p. 141.
29. Samuel Decalo, 'Afro-Israeli Technical Cooperation: Patterns of Setbacks and Successes' in Curtis and Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, pp. 81-99.
30. Susan A. Gitelson, 'Israel's African Setback in Perspective' in Curtis and Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, p. 185.
31. Quoted in Samuel Decalo, 'Africa and the UN Anti-Zionism Resolution: Roots and Causes', *Cultures et Developpement*, 8, 1, 1976, p. 93.
32. S. Astakhov, 'Israel's Expansion in the Third World', *International Affairs* (Moscow), 7, 1969, p. 53.
33. Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries*, p. 215.
34. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Division for International Cooperation, *Israel's Programme of International Cooperation, 1972*, p. 3.
35. Bernard Reich, 'Israel's Policy in Africa', *Middle East Journal*, 18, 1, 1964, p. 23.
36. *Ha'aretz*, (Hebrew) 19 August, 1962.
37. Quoted in Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries*, p. 209.
38. Reich, 'Israel's Policy in Africa', p. 25.
39. David Ben-Gurion, 'Israel's Security and her International Position', *Israel Government Yearbook*, 5720 (1959-60), p. 69.
40. Meir, *My Life*, p. 265.

41. Yaacov Shimoni, 'Israel, the Arabs and Africa', *Africa Report*, 21 August 1976, p. 52.
42. Quoted in K. Mathews, 'Tanzania and the Middle East' in K. Mathews and S.S. Mushi, (eds.), *Foreign Policy of Tanzania: A Reader* (1981), p. 155.
43. Quoted in Reich, 'Israel's Policy in Africa', p. 19.
44. See W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy: 1957-1966* (1969), p. 48.
45. Quoted in Kreinin, *Israel and Africa*, p. 3.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
47. Ankush B. Sawant, *Egypt's Africa Policy* (1981), p. 197.
48. Senghor in an interview with Tullia Zevi, 'Africans, Arabs, Israelis - A Triad of Suffering Peoples', *Africa Report*, 17, August, 1972, pp. 11-13.
49. Quoted in Kreinin, *Israel and Africa*, pp. 4-5.
50. Dadou Thiam, *The Foreign Policy of African States* (1965), p. 62.
51. Quoted in Kreinin, *Israel and Africa*, pp. 4-5.

## 2

## Africa and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Before the Yom Kippur War

Israel's overriding objective in Africa was to escape from its political isolation. Through the creation of a large network of diplomatic ties on the continent, it sought to normalize its position in the international community. By offering the new African states a variety of aid programmes, Israel aimed to secure their friendship and political support. Although, occasionally, there was optimism in Israel that its ties in Africa might lead toward peace with the Arabs, its motives were far less ambitious. Primarily, Israel hoped that the Africans would be unwilling to endorse and join the hostile diplomatic campaign waged by the Arab world.

Like Israel, the Arab states also sought to win the support of the new African states and maximize their influence on the continent. After their success in the 1950s in preventing Israel from attending the various gatherings of Third World nations and the favourable response of the Asian countries, the Arabs were clearly expecting to secure the support of the African nations as well. The speed at which Israel managed to establish its presence in Africa and the warmth of its reception took the Arab world by surprise. Accordingly, the Arabs' initial reaction and response to the Africans' acceptance of Israel was essentially negative and hostile. They immediately undertook steps aimed at undermining Israel's relations on the continent and counter-acting its influence.

The African continent soon became a diplomatic battleground for Israel and the Arabs, where both sides sought to expand their influence at the expense of the other. In response to Israel's diplomatic initiative, Egypt launched a sustained effort of its own aimed at undermining Israel's influence and enlightening the African leaders of the 'real nature of Israel'.<sup>1</sup> The Arab League also issued a warning to the new African states of the dangers in accepting aid and assistance from Israel. 'Tel Aviv's offers have been', it cautioned, 'in reality a facade for neo-colonialism trying to sneak through the back window after the old well-known colonialism had been driven out through the front door.'<sup>2</sup> The reaction of the Arab states and their stand regarding Israel's relations in Africa was expressed bluntly by

President Nasser of Egypt when he swore that he would 'chase out Israel from Africa'.<sup>3</sup>

Ghana, because of Nkrumah's high regard for Israel, came under particular pressure. Egypt and Syria decided not to attend Ghana's independence celebrations, while the members of the Arab League condemned Ghana for what they termed as 'its unnatural contacts' with Israel and informed the Ghanaian government that its natural position was with the Afro-Asian bloc and not Israel.<sup>4</sup> Ships owned by the Black Star Line, Ghana's national shipping line which had been set up as a joint Israeli-Ghananian venture, were prevented by Egypt from passing through the Suez Canal. Jordan, for its part, declared a total boycott of goods produced by joint Israeli-African enterprises in Nigeria and Ghana.

The Africans resented and reacted bitterly to the efforts of the Arabs to undermine their relations with Israel. Israel's presence and offers of aid had been gratefully received and eagerly sought after by the new states. Israel was not regarded as a threat to African independence. Instead it was seen as a useful and helpful partner in the development of the African continent. Accordingly, the African states consistently refused to back the Arabs in their campaign against Israel. The Arabs' dispute with Israel was of no direct concern to them. President François Tombalbaye of Chad expressed the determination of many in Africa to avoid becoming embroiled in the Middle East conflict. 'Chad will not permit herself to be dragged into the Arab-Israeli dispute', he declared during a visit to Israel in 1965, 'we will strongly oppose any attempts to embroil us in the dispute or to turn us into a tool of any country which is interested in exploiting this dispute for its own interests.'<sup>5</sup> President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, reflected the resolve of the Africans to resist the pressures exerted on them by the Arabs: 'We are not going to let our friends determine who are enemies are'.<sup>6</sup> When Arab embassies in Nigeria protested against the visit of Israel's foreign minister, Golda Meir in October 1964, they were swiftly and angrily rebuffed in a communique issued by the Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs:

The Government of Nigeria ... views with great concern and seriousness the subtle attempt made by some friendly countries to disturb the normal relations of friendship existing between Israel and Nigeria, and particularly regards the joint memorandum submitted over the signatures of the embassies listed above as constituting undue and unwarranted intervention in the internal affairs of Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

Instead of distancing themselves from Israel, relations continued to prosper. Some states even expressed support for Israel's position concerning the issue of direct negotiations with the Arab states. In a speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1960, Kwame Nkrumah appealed to the Arab states to accept the political realities of the region and recognize the existence of the state of Israel.<sup>8</sup> The following year nine African states were among the sixteen sponsors of a resolution at the United Nations, which called for direct negotiations to be initiated between Israel and the Arabs.<sup>9</sup> The President of Congo (Brazzaville) declared 'Israel can always rely on the Brazzaville States especially in the discussions in the U.N.' During the debate on this resolution the Saudi Arabian delegate accused the Africans for 'selling out' to Israel. His comment evoked bitter memories of the Arab slave trade and drew an angry response by the delegate of the Ivory Coast. 'The representative of Saudi Arabia may be used to buying Negroes', he retorted, 'but he can never buy us'.<sup>10</sup> In 1962 a similar resolution, sponsored by twelve African and nine other states, was presented to the General Assembly. Though neither of the resolutions were adopted by the United Nations, the sponsorship by the African states of positions which reflected Israel's call for direct, face to face, peace talks was an indication of the level of support that they were prepared to show for Israel. Further evidence of the level of acceptance and recognition of Israel in Africa was the strong support the African states displayed for the election of Israeli representatives to administrative posts of the United Nations.

In addition to the pressures exerted at the bilateral level, the Arab states of North Africa tried to counter Israel's influence in Africa at the various pan-African meetings and conferences in which they participated. They would consistently endeavour to have the situation in the Middle East included on the agenda of these conferences and introduce resolutions condemning Israel. The first major Arab diplomatic effort in this direction was made as early as April 1958. At the First Conference of Independent African States held in Accra, Egypt sought to have Israel branded as a racist and imperialist power. This attempt to have the conference condemn Israel was strongly opposed by Nkrumah and the resolution passed at the end of the conference did no more than express concern over the question of Palestine and call for a 'just solution of the Palestine question'.<sup>11</sup> At the All-African People's Conference, held in Accra in December 1958, which was attended by representatives of African political parties, trade unions and nationalist organizations, the African dele-

gates also resisted the Egyptian efforts to have Israel denounced as an imperialist state.<sup>12</sup> The Second Conference of Independent African States held in Addis Ababa in June 1960, also rejected an Egyptian proposal that African states should sever their ties with Israel. The Declaration issued at the end of the conference merely expressed concern that the Accra resolution of 1958 and the various UN resolutions on the Middle East conflict had not been implemented.

It was at the Casablanca conference of January 1961 that Israel encountered its first major diplomatic setback in Africa. The three Black African states which attended the conference, Ghana, Guinea and Mali, all signed the so-called Casablanca Declaration. This condemned Israel for depriving the Palestinians of their legitimate rights and went on to denounce Israel as 'an instrument in the service of imperialism and neo-colonialism not only in the Middle East but also in Africa and Asia'.<sup>13</sup> The Casablanca conference was the first occasion where a group of African states was willing to support an Egyptian resolution condemning Israel. On his return from Casablanca, President Nasser triumphantly announced to the National Assembly that the Palestinian problem had now become an African problem as well. Nasser's optimism was not reflected by the reactions in Africa to the Casablanca Declaration. The call on states to abandon their dealings with Israel was rejected and dismissed in many influential quarters in Africa. Shortly after the conference, African leaders told Israel that it should not to judge them by resolutions passed at international gatherings but by their actions. Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast went so far as to declare that the resolution was not just inopportune but was totally unjustified.<sup>14</sup>

The Israeli government was surprised and dismayed by the willingness of Ghana, Guinea and Mali to endorse Nasser's hostile stance. Nonetheless, it did not consider withdrawing its aid programmes from those countries or reducing the level of its activities in Africa generally. On the contrary, it decided to expand and intensify its efforts. There was a recognition in Israel that the resolution did not reflect any real changes in the nature of its position in Africa but that it was a result of changes in the relations between African states themselves. Furthermore, despite the fact that Ghana, Guinea and Mali were signatories to the Casablanca Declaration, they still welcomed the presence of the Israeli experts in their countries and, paradoxically, continued to maintain friendly relations with Israel.

The Casablanca conference witnessed the interplay of diverse issues working to the disadvantage of Israel and demonstrated the great advantage the Arabs held over Israel in multilateral settings

especially in Africa and the Third World. Ghana was the only state at the conference that could have resisted Egypt's demand for branding Israel as an imperialist base. It was a stance that Nkrumah had taken at previous Pan-African conferences. Nkrumah's reasons for accepting the condemnation of Israel were a result of having to accommodate himself with the other members of the Casablanca group, rather than the expression of a new-found, genuine hostility toward Israel. During the debate on the Congo, Nkrumah, who had refused to withdraw the Ghanaian troops from the United Nations force, again found himself in opposition to the other states. Accordingly, he was unwilling to isolate himself even further and agreed to Nasser's position on Israel.<sup>15</sup> Though the Casablanca Declaration had no impact whatsoever on the development of Israel's relations in Africa, it was an early sign of the future difficulties that Israel was to encounter in Africa. It showed that for the sake of broader regional and political considerations the African countries were willing to sacrifice their friendship with Israel.

When the African leaders met in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Arab-Israeli conflict was potentially one of the more divisive issues facing them. Such was the opposition of the Monrovia and Brazzaville group of states to the attempts of the Arabs to make the conflict an African issue that they made the dropping of the issue one of the conditions for their rapprochement with the Casablanca states.<sup>16</sup> At the preparatory meetings before the summit was convened, Dr John Karefa Smart, Sierra Leone's foreign minister, actually challenged his Egyptian counterpart to give assurances that his country's commitments in the Middle East and Africa were not in conflict. Originally the Arab states had hoped that the situation in the Middle East would be on the agenda of the summit meeting. They soon became aware, however, that any attempt to raise the question of Israel would be defeated. In light of the determination of the Africans not to discuss the Middle East, they decided not to press for any resolution or condemnation of Israel. In his opening address to the conference, President Nasser declared that, in a spirit of unselfishness, Egypt had decided not to raise the issue of Israel's infiltration into Africa.<sup>17</sup>

At the second OAU Heads of State summit, which met in Cairo in July 1964, the Arab states again tried to raise the question of Israel. Once more they were unsuccessful. Despite the fact the meeting was held in Egypt, the African states did not succumb to pressures exerted by the Arab leaders and again refused to discuss the situation in the Middle East. By the time the third Heads of State summit met, in

Accra in 1965, the Arab delegates were no longer attempting to present a resolution on the Middle East. The lessons of first two summits in Addis Ababa and Cairo had been learned; the issue of Israel was not even raised.

In the early years of the OAU, the Black African states were determined to prevent the issue of the Middle East conflict from entering into the politics of the organization. They would not allow the Arab states to introduce the issue for debate and consistently refused to condemn Israel. For them, the conflict between the Arabs and Israel was not an African issue and therefore it was irrelevant to the discussions of the OAU. Israel drew great satisfaction from the stance of the African states. The fact that the Africans were not prepared to engage themselves in a ritual condemnation of Israel was held to be an important diplomatic achievement. It was regarded as an acknowledgement of the success of its policies in Africa, and a sign of the improvement of its image and standing in the international community.

The reluctance of the African states to show any support for the Arabs persisted until 1967. Then, as a result of the Six Day War in June, the situation changed. The war produced a stunning victory for Israel over the Arab states who suffered a massive and humiliating defeat. In less than a week Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. The attack on Egypt, a fellow African state, and Israel's occupation of part of its territory made it increasingly more difficult for the Africans to ignore the appeals of the Arabs for support. From now on, they could no longer avoid addressing the situation in the Middle East. The Six Day War forced them to express their position on the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>18</sup>

In May, during the crisis which preceded the war, differences in positions of the African states were beginning to emerge. Following Nasser's announcement, on 22 May, that the Straits of Tiran were to be closed to Israeli shipping, senior officials from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Liberia, Togo, Cameroon and Dahomey all publicly declared their support for the principle of the freedom of navigation through the Straits. President Sékou Touré of Guinea took the opposite view. He announced his total support for Egypt and assured Nasser that Guinea was, if necessary, prepared to offer military support for his cause.<sup>19</sup> Immediately after the war Sékou Touré decided to expel the Israeli experts working in Guinea and broke off diplomatic relations with Israel. Given Sékou Touré's radical stance on many international issues, his action did not come as a complete shock to Israel's

leaders. More unexpected was the position adopted by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Before the crisis, relations between Israel and Tanzania had been particularly friendly. Israeli cooperation projects in Tanzania were among the most extensive in Africa. Tanzania was regarded as one of Israel's staunchest supporters. Suddenly, Nyerere, like Sékou Touré, sent a message of support to Nasser and offered Tanzania's aid to Egypt 'in defence of your rights against imperialism'. Shortly after the war, Nyerere declared that he regarded the establishment of the State of Israel as an act of aggression against the Arab people.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Sékou Touré, however, Nyerere did not break off diplomatic relations. Furthermore, he continued to ask Israel for aid.

The ambivalence of the African states and their reluctance to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict at the OAU was still maintained in the immediate aftermath of the Six Day War. An overwhelming majority of the members of the OAU rejected the call by Somalia and Guinea for an extraordinary session of the OAU to discuss the war. It was argued that the United Nations and not the OAU was the appropriate authority to deal with the conflict. Houphouët-Boigny expressed the feelings of many states when he declared that the problem of the Middle East was of such a magnitude that it could not be transferred from the United Nations to the OAU.<sup>21</sup> When the OAU Heads of State summit met in Kinshasa three months after the war, the Arab-Israeli conflict was not included on the original agenda. The Black African states still refused to discuss the situation in the Middle East. The impact of the war, and depth of the feelings and emotions that it had aroused meant, however, that the African states could not remain totally indifferent; they could no longer ignore the demands of the Arab members of the OAU that they should address the issue. At the insistence of Egypt, the Africans eventually agreed on the very last day of the summit, to issue a 'Declaration' on the Six Day War. Issued on the 14 September 1967, it was the first statement issued by the OAU on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The wording could hardly have been more non-committal and it fell far short of the expectations of the Arabs. The African leaders refused to describe Israel as an aggressor state and were content to limit their concern to the 'grave situation that exists in the United Arab Republic'. The most that they were prepared to offer Egypt was 'sympathy' and a willingness to work within the United Nations to secure the evacuation of Egyptian territory.<sup>22</sup>

It was at the Council of Ministers meeting, held in Addis Ababa in February 1968, that the Arabs finally succeeded in securing a resolution which condemned Israel as an aggressor state. The Council of



Ministers' resolution called for the 'immediate and unconditional withdrawal' of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab territories. It went on to urge the African states to 'extend their active support, political, moral and material, to the just cause of the United Arab Republic and other countries of the Middle East'.<sup>23</sup> While this resolution was approved by acclamation, it was not without controversy. Fifteen states, among them Ghana and the Ivory Coast, were reported to have expressed reservations over the passing of the resolution. They insisted that calls for an Israeli withdrawal should have been accompanied by the recognition by the Arab states of Israel's right to exist, and guarantees of its security.<sup>24</sup> There was also anger amongst the African states at the way the resolution had been introduced by the Arabs at the last minute, during the actual closing session of the meeting. The Secretary-General of the OAU, M. Diallo Telli, was even accused by some of the delegates of trying to railroad a condemnation of Israel through meeting.<sup>25</sup>

When the Council of Ministers resolution was submitted for approval to the Heads of State summit in September, it was rejected. Furthermore, it was the only resolution presented by the Council of Ministers which they did not accept. The one that was eventually adopted by the Heads of State summit in Algiers was radically different both in tone and wording from that agreed at the Council of Ministers meeting. The appeals of the Arab leaders for a resolution which contained a strong condemnation of Israel were ignored. Although the resolution still referred to the aggression committed against Egypt, nowhere was Israel actually mentioned by name. Significantly, too, the demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops was dropped. Instead the resolution called for the withdrawal of troops in accordance with the terms of Resolution 242 passed by the United Nations Security Council on 22 November 1967.<sup>26</sup>

It was not until September 1970, at the seventh OAU Heads of State summit meeting, that the Arab states managed to include the Middle East as a separate item on the agenda. The debate was headed 'The Continuing Occupation of Part of the Territories of the UAR by Foreign Forces'. Despite this success, the resolution passed by the summit did not differ significantly from those passed at the previous two summits. The resolution again expressed concern that the territory of a 'sister African state' was still under occupation by 'foreign forces' and reaffirmed the OAU's commitment and support for Resolution 242.<sup>27</sup>

By 1970 discussions on the situation in the Middle East had become a regular feature on the agenda of meetings of the OAU. After Egypt's defeat in the Six Day War, the African states could no longer refrain from acceding to the Arabs' demand that they should address the issue. They did not, however, greet the inclusion of this item with much enthusiasm and were prepared to display only a limited amount of support for the Arab cause. Much to the disappointment of the Arab members of the OAU, the majority of the Black African states were still unwilling to condemn Israel and were only prepared to reiterate their support for Security Council Resolution 242 in the OAU resolutions on the Middle East. Their interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict and their commitment to the Arab states of North Africa was at best indifferent and lukewarm. The Arab states had not yet managed to successfully challenge Israel's position in Africa and persuade the Africans of the justice of their cause.

The turning point came in 1971. At the Heads of State summit of that year there was an important change in the position and concern of the African states toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Arabs finally succeeded in convincing the Africans that the developments in the Middle East should be considered as an African problem. For the first time the OAU declared that the Arab-Israeli conflict directly affected them. They now accepted that Israel's continued occupation of Arab territory constituted a 'serious threat to the regional peace of Africa'.<sup>28</sup> The resolution on the Middle East entitled 'The Continued Aggression against the UAR' was far more critical of, and, indeed, hostile toward Israel than any of the previous resolutions passed by the OAU. The African states narrowed their interpretation of Resolution 242 and now called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied Arab territories. Furthermore, the Africans blamed Israel for the breakdown of the mediation mission of Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General. The summit expressed its full support for the efforts of Dr. Jarring and deplored what it termed as 'Israel's defiance' of his mission. Egypt, on the other hand, was praised for its 'constructive efforts' for peace in the region and its 'positive position' toward Jarring's initiative.<sup>29</sup>

During the summit the Africans decided to become actively involved in the search for a settlement of the conflict and embark on a peace initiative of their own. In the debate on the Middle East, President Kaunda of Zambia suggested an addendum to the resolution. He proposed that 'the current Chairman of the OAU should try to consult some of the elder statesmen of Africa so that they may bring

pressure on the Big Powers in order that the Israeli occupation should be terminated'. His proposal was welcomed and, in a slightly altered form to accommodate Israel's friends, was incorporated into the final resolution on the Middle East. Specifically, in paragraph six of the resolution, the African states instructed the chairman of the OAU to 'consult with the Heads of State and Government so that they use their influence to ensure the full implementation of this resolution'.<sup>30</sup>

In the discussions that followed the passage of this resolution, the summit decided to establish a special committee of ten Heads of State, known as the 'Ten Wise Men'. The committee was chaired by President Moktar Ould Daddah of Mauritania, then Chairman of the OAU and consisted of the Emperor of Ethiopia and the Presidents of Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Zaire. It included some of Israel's strongest supporters and, with the sole exception of Mauritania, all these states maintained diplomatic relations with Israel. While the committee's terms of reference were never actually defined, it was openly understood that its task was to help implement Resolution 242 and facilitate the revival of the Jarring mission.

The first meeting of the 'Ten Wise Men' decided that a sub-committee of four heads of state consisting of President Senghor of Senegal (as Chairman), President Ahidjo of Cameroon, President Mobutu of Zaire and General Gowon of Nigeria, should visit Egypt and Israel to obtain information, and on the basis of their findings, make recommendations to the full committee. President Ould Daddah was sent to New York on a separate mission to consult with UN Secretary-General U Thant and Ambassador Jarring. The four presidents visited Egypt and Israel between 2 and 9 November 1971 and presented their findings to the full committee which met in Dakar on 10 November. At the end of the meeting a memorandum drafted by Senghor was adopted and signed by the nine participants at the meeting.<sup>31</sup>

The committee proposals were far more sympathetic and impartial toward Israel than the resolution which had been passed at the OAU Summit in June. They recommended:

- i) indirect negotiations within the terms of Resolution 242 should be resumed under the auspices of Dr Jarring.
- ii) there should be an interim agreement for the opening of the Suez Canal.
- iii) secure and recognized boundaries be determined in the peace agreement.

- iv) the solution to problems of security should be achieved through guarantees by the United Nations, the creation of demilitarized zones and the stationing of international forces.
- v) the terms for the withdrawal from occupied territories should be included in the peace agreement.
- vi) the freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran to all shipping should be guaranteed.<sup>32</sup>

Following the Dakar meeting, a second four-man delegation, again headed by Senghor, made a further visit to the Middle East between 10 and 14 December in order to present the committee's recommendations to Israel and Egypt and elicit their response. While both accepted, in principle, the report of the African Presidents, each added a number of reservations of their own to the various clauses. At this point, it appeared that the African initiative had succeeded in drawing the positions of Egypt and Israel closer together than at any time since the Six Day War.<sup>33</sup> For a short while there was even a real possibility that the Jarring mission would be able to return to the Middle East. This optimism proved to be shortlived. Differences in interpretation soon emerged between Israel and Egypt, as well as amongst the Africans themselves, as to the aim of the African initiative, the meaning of the memorandum and the responses to it. The OAU mission failed to break the diplomatic deadlock and bridge the gap between the Egyptian demand for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces and Israel's insistence that negotiations should progress without any preconditions. The African Presidents found a willingness from both sides to reactivate the Jarring Mission but were unable to find a way to overcome the impasse over the terms for its continuation.<sup>34</sup>

While Israel and Egypt issued statements welcoming the decision of the OAU to embark on a peace mission, both were sceptical as to its value and as to what it would achieve. Their acceptance of the OAU mission was motivated not so much by the expectation of progress toward a resolution of the conflict but rather by the desire to safeguard and advance their own interests in Africa, and to secure the support of the African states for their respective positions. Egypt, for its part, was eager to show that Israel was responsible for the diplomatic stalemate and for the breakdown of the Jarring mission. It hoped that by exposing Israel's intransigence, Israel's diplomatic position in Africa would be undermined and that the African states would increase the level of support for the Arab cause. Not unexpectedly, Israel's goals were the opposite of the Egyptian ones. It sought

to prevent any further erosion of its relations with Africa. To that end, Israel hoped that the committee would accept its interpretation of Resolution 242 and that the African states would modify the pro-Egyptian positions and resolutions which they had begun to adopt at recent OAU meetings. Rather than utilize the OAU mission as a means toward negotiating an agreement, the main goal of both Egypt and Israel was to curry favour with the African Presidents and influence their final conclusions. Their attitude toward the committee has been described as resembling 'attitudes of competitors to the jury of a popularity contest, rather than an attitude to a mediator'.<sup>35</sup>

Israel emerged from the African peace mission more harmed than helped. The African Presidents left Israel with the clear impression that its rigid and inflexible position was responsible for the diplomatic impasse. In his report to the next OAU summit, held at Rabat in June 1972, President Ould Daddah attributed the failure of the OAU's mission to Israel's intransigent attitude. He informed the Assembly that 'Israel strongly rejected any peace settlement and was even more strongly opposed to anything that might lead to the withdrawal of its forces from occupied territory'.<sup>36</sup> Not a single member of the Committee of Ten challenged Ould Daddah on his account of the mission. Support and sympathy for Israel amongst African states was now patently on the decline. An immediate consequence of the failure of the President's mission was the passage by the OAU, without a single vote in opposition, of its harshest and most critical resolution on the Middle East. Worse still for Israel, this resolution was proposed by the foreign minister of the Ivory Coast, one of Israel's closest allies in Africa.

The resolution denounced Israel for 'its refusal to respond favourably to the initiative of OAU' and for its 'negative and obstructive attitude which prevents the resumption of the Jarring mission'. Egypt, on the other hand, was praised for 'its co-operation with the Committee of Ten, its positive attitude and its continuous efforts for the restoration of peace in the region'.<sup>37</sup> The OAU meeting went beyond its previous resolutions in its support for Egypt and in its criticism of Israel. It not only called upon Israel to withdraw immediately from all the occupied territories but also demanded that it 'publicly declare its adherence to the principle of non-annexation of territories through the use of force'. Whereas in the past the OAU had simply stressed its solidarity with Egypt, it now called upon its members to give 'effective support' to Egypt and recognized Egypt's right to use 'every means' to recover its territory. The African states, however, resisted the calls by the Arabs that they sever their ties with

Israel. Instead they limited themselves to calling upon the members of the United Nations to refrain from supplying Israel with any military equipment or moral support likely to enable it to strengthen its military potential and to perpetuate its occupation of Arab and African territories.<sup>38</sup>

Together with these setbacks at the multilateral level, Israel was beginning encounter difficulties in its relations with a number of African states. On 30 March 1972, President Idi Amin announced that he was closing the Israeli embassy in Kampala and expelling all the Israelis from Uganda. Over the years, Israel had established a strong and extensive network of relations in Uganda. In particular, its programme of military assistance to Uganda was one of its largest in Africa. Amin himself had received his military training in Israel. When he took power in 1971, it was rumoured that Israel had been instrumental in assisting him in his coup d'état, a suspicion fostered by Amin's laudatory remarks about Israel. In July 1971, during his second visit to Jerusalem, Amin sought a massive increase in the level of economic and military aid, including a demand that Israel supply Uganda with Phantom jets. When Israel refused, Amin began to look toward the Arab world for assistance. In February 1972 he visited Libya, and gained assurances of support from Colonel Qaddafi. One month after his return from Tripoli, Amin renounced his friendship with Israel. Overnight his image changed from being one of Israel's leading supporters in Africa to becoming the new champion of the Arab cause.<sup>39</sup>

At the end of the year, Israel's relations in Africa came under further pressure. On 28 November, shortly after a visit by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to Ndjamena, Chad became the second state to break off diplomatic relations with Israel. Within the next few weeks a further three states Congo-Brazzaville, Niger and Mali decided to take similar action. On 3 January 1973 Abba Eban, Israel's foreign minister told the Knesset that it was possible that a few more African states might decide to sever their relations. However, he did not regard these setbacks as tragic and assured the Israeli parliament that one could not speak of a collapse of Israel's position on the continent.<sup>40</sup> Despite Eban's assurances, it was clear that Israel's position in Africa was coming under extreme pressure. Even the most loyal of its supporters on the continent were becoming increasingly reluctant to be associated with Israel and defend it in face of the mounting Arab campaign. A planned visit by Eban to Africa in May had to be quietly dropped. On 16 May, several days before the start

of the OAU Heads of State summit, Burundi became the sixth state to break off ties with Israel.

Encouraged by these diplomatic successes, the Arabs and in particular Libya, sought to make the Arab-Israeli conflict the central issue of the tenth anniversary summit of the OAU. A few weeks before the summit, Colonel Qaddafi appealed to all the African leaders to boycott it unless the venue of the summit and the headquarters of the OAU were moved from Addis Ababa to Egypt, or unless Ethiopia agreed to immediately break off relations with Israel. Accusing Ethiopia of collaborating with Israel, he called upon the African states 'to define their attitudes to the Zionist enemy and co-ordinate them with the Libyan views'.<sup>41</sup>

Qaddafi's flagrant attempt to dictate the policies of the OAU caused outrage and led to a bitter reaction throughout Africa. The *Nigerian Tribune*, reflecting the feelings of many Africans, accused the Libyan leader of indulging in 'crude and undisguised blackmail'. In particular the Africans objected to the way the Arab states were trying to determine their foreign policies. In his reply to Qaddafi, Emperor Haile Selassie insisted that no one member of the OAU could impose his will on other member states. The *Daily Nation* of Kenya commented 'Our Libyan friends have no right whatsoever to dictate other people's foreign policy. Still less are they entitled to dictate their own whims to any other equally sovereign and independent nation'. The challenge to the sovereignty of the African states was rebuffed by President Senghor: 'We oppose any-one who wishes to dictate our foreign policy. Senegal is an independent state'.<sup>42</sup> Not a single state heeded Qaddafi's call for a boycott of the summit. All forty-one members of the OAU, including Libya, were represented at the summit which met at the end of May.

As a result of this controversy and the outrage it caused in Africa, the attempt by the Arabs to secure a resolution which called for a total diplomatic boycott of Israel was thwarted. It was only through the skillful presentation of the Arab case by President Boumedienne of Algeria that the Arabs were saved from a potentially embarrassing diplomatic defeat. In an impassioned speech he urged the African leaders, who had not yet done so, to break off ties with Israel as a 'concrete act of African unity'. 'The problems of the Middle East', he contended, 'were an integral part of the African struggle against colonialism and imperialism'. Condemning Israel for illegally occupying a piece of African soil, the Algerian leader declared that it was an insult to the whole continent and that Israel was committing an act of aggression similar to that of Portugal, Rhodesia and South

Africa. 'Africa cannot adopt one attitude towards colonialism in Southern Africa', he reminded the Assembly, 'and a completely different one towards Zionist colonialism in North Africa'.<sup>43</sup>

Boumedienne's speech won him admiration from the delegates at the summit and managed to repair much of the damage caused by Qaddafi. The resolution on the Middle East, unanimously adopted by the summit, not only reaffirmed the previous positions of the OAU on the conflict but went on to warn Israel that its refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories 'might lead OAU members to take at the African level individually or collectively, political and economic measures against it in conformity with the principles contained in the OAU and UN Charters'.<sup>44</sup>

At the Non-Aligned Conference held in Algiers at the beginning of September, the Arabs intensified their efforts to isolate Israel diplomatically and politically. Not only did the Arab states denounce Israel but they were also supported in this respect by other Non-Aligned leaders such as Tito, Gandhi and Sihanouk. The tone of the resolution on the Middle East was unreservedly hostile toward Israel. The conference called upon all Non-Aligned countries 'to pledge their support for the Arab people of Palestine in their struggle against Zionist, racist and colonialist settlements for the recovery of their full national rights'. It praised 'the decision of certain member-countries to break off relations with Israel' and urged the other members of the movement to 'take steps to boycott Israel diplomatically, economically, militarily and culturally'.<sup>45</sup> Those states which still maintained relations with Israel were challenged to justify their position and came under intense pressure during the conference to break off their ties.<sup>46</sup> On his return from Algiers, General Gowon told reporters that Nigeria would review its relations with Israel if it continued to be arrogant in the face of world opinion.<sup>47</sup> Shortly after the conference, Togo announced that it was severing relations.

The cumulative impact of the OAU summit in May and the Non-Aligned meeting in September made the continued association with Israel increasingly problematic in many African capitals. On 4 October, on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko told the General Assembly of the United Nations that he was forced to choose between a friend, Israel, and a brother, Egypt.<sup>48</sup> For Mobutu the choice was clear: kinship came before friendship. Whereas previously Israel had acted with resignation at the decision of Chad, Niger, Mali, Burundi and Togo to break off relations, Mobutu's action came as a shock and blow. Zaire had been one Israel closest and most loyal friends in Africa. Mobutu, who had received

his own military training in Israel, was known for his warmth and admiration for the country.

The outbreak of the Yom Kippur War on the 6 October, combined with the relentless determination of the Arabs to ostracize Israel from the international community, placed Israel's relations in Africa under even greater strain. The crossing of the Suez Canal into 'Africa' by Israeli troops on 16 October further increased the pressures on the African states to express their solidarity and support for Egypt, and to undertake effective action against Israel. Maintaining close and friendly relations with Jerusalem was rapidly becoming an untenable proposition for many African leaders.

Israel was immediately condemned by many states and was held responsible for the outbreak of hostilities. The Tanzanian government declared that the war was a 'direct result of the insolence and deliberate and continuing aggression of Israel against the Arab people'. Israel, it concluded, 'is therefore responsible for this dangerous development and Israel bears the blame'.<sup>49</sup> President Bokassa of the Central African Republic, a long time friend of Israel, also blamed Israel for the outbreak of the war.<sup>50</sup> Several states sent messages of solidarity to President Sadat. The Administrative Secretary-General of the OAU, Nzo Ekaganaki, pledged the full support of the OAU for Egypt and the Arab cause.<sup>51</sup> Some states even offered to help Egypt in its war effort. President Tombalbaye declared that Chad also considered itself at war. President Micombero informed President Sadat that the armed forces of Burundi were at his disposal in order to fight the 'common enemy'.<sup>52</sup> Idi Amin even offered personally to fight alongside his troops against Israel.

The Yom Kippur War served as the catalyst for the mass severance of diplomatic relations. In rapid succession, the African states rushed to distance themselves from Israel. At first several states refused to be pressured into joining this flight. Ethiopia, Liberia, Kenya and the Ivory Coast, all known for their friendship with Israel, were particularly reluctant to take such action. President Senghor was actually openly critical of those countries that had cut their ties with Israel. He regarded the breaking of relations as ill-advised and did not consider it to be an effective way of restoring peace to the Middle East.<sup>53</sup> President Houphouet-Boigny reacted in a similar manner:

Our greatest shortcoming is our faithfulness. We do not change friends every day. Some have reasons of their own to break with Israel. As for us it is completely out of the question. Besides how

could I exercise an influence on the Israelis if I had no diplomatic relations with them.<sup>54</sup>

**TABLE 2.1: Black African States which severed diplomatic relations with Israel, 1967-1973.**

African State	Diplomatic Relations Broken	
Guinea	12	June 1967
Uganda	30	March 1972
Chad	28	November 1972
Congo (Brazzaville)	31	December 1972
Niger	4	January 1973
Mali	5	January 1973
Burundi	16	May 1973
Togo	21	September 1973
Zaire	4	October 1973
Dahomey	6	October 1973
Rwanda	9	October 1973
Cameroon	15	October 1973
Equatorial Guinea	15	October 1973
Upper Volta	18	October 1973
Tanzania	18	October 1973
Malagasy Republic	20	October 1973
Central African Republic	21	October 1973
Sierra Leone	22	October 1973
Ethiopia	23	October 1973
Nigeria	25	October 1973
Zambia	25	October 1973
Gambia	25	October 1973
Ghana	27	October 1973
Senegal	27	October 1973
Gabon	29	October 1973
Kenya	1	November 1973
Liberia	2	November 1973
Ivory Coast	8	November 1973
Botswana	13	November 1973

Source: Ron Kochan, Susan A. Gitelson and Ephraim Dubek, 'Black African Voting Behaviour in the United Nations on the Middle East Conflict: 1967-1972' in Michael Curtis and Susan A. Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*.



'On the 20 October President Kenyatta declared that Kenya was not going to become involved in the conflicts of other peoples. Kenya he insisted 'would remain friends of all and enemies of none'.<sup>55</sup> However, as the list of states who had broken relations grew those who refused to do so became increasingly isolated and exposed. Despite their early assertions to the contrary, Senghor, Houphouët-Boigny and Kenyatta soon joined the bandwagon and renounced their friendship with Israel. By the middle of November, in a matter of only thirty-eight days, twenty-one states in Africa had broken off relations. At the end of the war only four countries, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mauritius were still maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel. (See Table 2.1)

The dramatic change in the position and policies of the African states was underlined at the extraordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting convened in Addis Ababa from 19-21 November to discuss the war in the Middle East. The language and sentiments of the Declaration of Policy on the international situation and the resolution adopted on the Middle East was radically different from anything previously agreed to at an OAU meeting. The resolution not only denounced Israel for its aggression and annexation of Arab territory but also urged the members of the OAU 'to strengthen individual and collective measures to further isolate Israel in the political, military and cultural fields.'<sup>56</sup>

The Declaration linked the breaking of diplomatic relations with Israel as part of Africa's broader struggle against colonialism and imperialism:

The struggle of the African countries and the action taken by the Organization of African Unity reflect the profound aspirations of the peoples of the continent to justice, freedom and progress. Their aim is to free themselves from colonialism everywhere, to eliminate apartheid and Zionism ... In pursuance of this policy, the Council of Ministers underlines the need for the African countries to undertake firm and concerted action so as to contribute to the settlement of disputes affecting the Third World, at grips with the power politics of imperialism, colonialism and Zionism. The Middle East is once again the scene of a war provoked by Israel's expansionist policy of aggression against the Arab countries.<sup>57</sup>

The Yom Kippur War of October 1973 witnessed the sudden collapse of Israel's position in Africa. The Africans had seemingly reached total agreement with the Arabs over the question of Israel.

Whereas six years previously, during the Six Day War of June 1967, the African states had been reluctant to address the situation in the Middle East, now they had openly and unreservedly sided with Egypt and the Arab cause. For the Arab states it was stunning diplomatic victory at the expense of Israel. Israel's policy toward Africa which had been so successful in the 1960s and the extensive network of relations it had created, were in ruins. It was an end of an era.

#### Notes

1. See Jacques Baulin, *The Arab Role in Africa* (1962), p. 105.
2. Quoted in Bernard Reich, 'Israel's Policy in Africa', *Middle East Journal*, 18, 1, 1964, p. 25.
3. See Leopold Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries: New Approaches to Cooperation* (1967), p. 204.
4. See Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa: The Politics of Cooperation: A Study of Foreign Policy and Technical Assistance*, (unpublished Phd thesis), University of Pennsylvania, 1970, p. 123.
5. Quoted in Leopold Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries*, p. 203.
6. Ibid.
7. Quoted in Olusola Ojo, 'Nigeria and Israel', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 8, 1, 1986, p. 82.
8. Ali Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy of Dependency and Change* (1977), p. 138.
9. The states were Central African Republic, Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Malagasy, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Upper Volta.
10. Mordechai E. Kreinin, *Israel and Africa: A Study in Technical Cooperation* (1964), p. 177.
11. Jon Woronoff, *Organizing African Unity* (1970), p. 34.
12. Arnold Rivkin, 'Israel and the Afro-Asian World', *Foreign Affairs*, 37, 3, 1959, p. 487.
13. For documents on the Casablanca conference see Colin Legum *Pan-Africanism* (1965), pp. 205-10.
14. Ojo, 'The Arab-Israeli Conflict', p. 144.
15. Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 51.
16. Zdenek Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity*, (1977), p. 158.
17. Woronoff, *Organizing African Unity*, p. 138.
18. See Samuel Decalo, 'Africa and the Middle East War', *Africa Report*, 12, October, 1967, pp. 57-61.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
20. See K. Mathews, 'Tanzania and the Middle East' in K. Mathews and S.S. Mushi *Foreign Policy of Tanzania 1961-81: A Reader* (1981), p. 157.
21. *West Africa*, 5 August, 1967, p. 1030.
22. *OAU Document*, AHG/St. 2 (IV). Kinshasa, September, 1967.
23. *OAU Document*, CM/Res. 134 (X). Addis Ababa, February, 1968.
24. See *Africa Report*, 13, April, 1968, p. 21.
25. See *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1968-69 (1969), p. 621.
26. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 53 (V). Algiers, September, 1968.
27. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 62 (VII). Addis Ababa, September, 1970.
28. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 62 (VIII). Addis Ababa, September 1971.
29. *OAU Document*, *Ibid.* For details of Jarring's mission see Saadia Touval, *The Peace Brokers* (1982), pp. 134-65.
30. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 62 (VIII). Addis Ababa, September, 1971.
31. Tanzania was not represented at this meeting and took no further part in the deliberations of the committee.
32. For text of the memorandum see Colin Legum, 'Israel's Year in Africa: A Study of Secret Diplomacy' in *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1972-73, (1973), p. A128.
33. *Ibid.*, p. A130.
34. For further details of the OAU Peace Mission see the following: Susan A. Gitelson, 'The OAU Mission and the Middle East Conflict', *International Organization*, 27, 3, 1973, pp. 413-19; Ron Kochan, 'An African Peace Mission to the Middle East: The One man Initiative of President Senghor', *African Affairs*, 72, 287, 1973, pp. 186-96; Colin Legum, 'Israel's Year in Africa: A Study of Secret Diplomacy', pp. A124-133, and Saadia Touval, *The Peace Brokers*, pp. 203-24.
35. Saadia Touval, *The Peace Brokers*, p. 210.
36. *Africa Research Bulletin*, July, 1972, p. 2497.
37. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 67 (IX). Rabat, June, 1972.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Ali Mazrui suggests the opposite sequence of events; that Amin had already decided to expel the Israelis and that he went to Libya to see if he extract some extra benefit from his decision. See Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations*, p. 143.
40. *Washington Post*, 7 January, 1973.

41. Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest*, p. 162.
42. The above are quoted in Arie Oded, 'Slaves and Oil: The Arab Image in Black Africa', *Weiner Library Bulletin*, 27, New Series 32, (1974), pp. 44-5.
43. For text of Boumedienne speech see *El Moudjahid* (Algiers), 27/28 May, 1973.
44. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 70 (X). Addis Ababa, May, 1973
45. *Non-Aligned Movement Conference Resolution*, 'On the Middle East Situation and the Palestine Issue', NAC/ALG/Conf/4/P/Res.2 in *International Documents on Palestine*, 1973 (1976), pp. 274-5.
46. During the conference Fidel Castro unexpectedly announced that he was severing ties with Israel despite the fact that he had previously declared that he would never take such a step.
47. *Africa Contemporary Record* 1973-74, p. B742.
48. *Jerusalem Post*, 5 October, 1973.
49. *Daily News* (Dar Es Salaam), 9 October, 1973.
50. *Africa Research Bulletin*, October, 1973 p. 3023.
51. *Daily News* (Dar Es Salaam), 11 October, 1973.
52. Samuel Decalo, 'Africa and the UN Anti-Zionism Resolution: Roots and Causes', *Cultures et Developpement*, 8, 1, 1976, p. 111.
53. *Ghanian Times*, 11 October, 1973.
54. Quoted in Jake C. Miller, 'African-Israeli Relations: Impact on Continental Unity', *Middle East Journal*, 29, 4, 1975, p. 402.
55. *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 21 October, 1973.
56. *OAU Document*, ECM/Res. 20 (VIII). Addis Ababa, November, 1973.
57. *OAU Document*, ECM/Res. 20 (VIII). Addis Ababa, November, 1973.

### 3

## Explaining the Break

The severing of diplomatic relations by the African states was seen in Africa and the Arab World as heralding the emergence of a new era of partnership and cooperation in Afro-Arab relations. The Africans and the Arabs appeared to have discovered a sense of communality and solidarity which had previously eluded them. President Boumedienne of Algeria regarded this new-found solidarity as representing an important landmark in African international relations. He believed that this cooperation, combining the human and material resources of the African and Arab states, would constitute a new and formidable force in international relations and that it would be capable of playing a decisive role in the service of justice and freedom throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

A wide range of contrasting and conflicting explanations have been advanced to account for the reversal of Israel's fortunes in Africa and for the change in the positions of the African states toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. One set of arguments maintains that the mass break of relations was a direct result of the diplomatic and economic pressures exerted by the Arabs upon the Africans in the years before 1973 which reached a peak during the Yom Kippur War. For others, the African action was not an act of political expediency but rather one of political conversion to the Arab cause. The Africans, it is argued, had now finally begun to identify with the Arab states in their conflict with Israel, to see the justice of their cause, and regard Israel as agent of imperialism in Africa. Other factors such as the question of African and Islamic solidarity, Israel's continuing occupation of Arab territories, the growing African concern over Israel's relations with South Africa and the increasing radicalism amongst African leaders have also been listed as contributing toward the decision of the African states.

This chapter will assess the various interpretations of, and the factors accounting for, the mass severance of diplomatic relations. The analysis shows that no one reason by itself is sufficient to explain the action taken by the Africans. In order to fully understand the dramatic reversal of Israel's fortunes in Africa, it is necessary to examine a number of developments and processes, many of which had been in evidence for several years before 1973.

The prevailing interpretation of the break, both at the time and since, holds that the African states finally succumbed to the mounting Arab diplomatic offensive. Israel's demise resulted from the shrewd use by the Arabs of money and oil as weapons of political and economic persuasion. It was not any new-found ideological affinity with the Arabs that led the Africans to switch sides but rather economic and political opportunism.<sup>2</sup> On account of its unusual and dramatic nature, the mass severance of relations by countries only marginally affected by the conflict, it has generally been assumed that there must have been some form of prior arrangement and understanding between the Africans and the Arabs. Akinsanya contends that by showing support for the Arabs, the Africans were hoping for some sort of economic and financial *quid pro quo*: 'When the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided to use Arab oil as a weapon "to alter some major powers policies towards Israel", African states hoped that they would be spared the adverse effects of the oil embargo.'<sup>3</sup> This point of view is given further weight when one takes into account the depth of the African criticism and the bitter disappointment of the Africans at the level of assistance extended by the Arabs in helping them overcome the devastating effect on their economies of the huge rise in the price of oil.<sup>4</sup> The belief that the Africans bowed to Arab pressures was one particularly favoured in Israel. In their reactions to the severance of ties Israeli officials frequently alluded to the role played by the Arabs. Expressing the attitudes of many in Israel the influential newspaper *Ha'aretz* bluntly asserted that the break was caused by the brutal economic and military pressures exerted by the Arab states.<sup>5</sup>

Other writers have disputed the claim that the Africans broke relations for financial benefit and regard this interpretation as an insult to the dignity of the Africans and the Arabs.<sup>6</sup> Mazrui derides those who have suggested that the African states broke off relations for the sake of cheaper oil, though he himself admits that some states did expect special rewards from the Arabs.<sup>7</sup> Cervenka asserts that there is no proof that 'the Arabs ever mentioned the possibility of using the "oil weapon" against African countries or that the Africans threw their support behind the Arabs with financial benefit in mind.'<sup>8</sup>

While there is no firm evidence of Arab threats and promises, it is erroneous to deny that this factor played no part in influencing the decision of the African states and ignore the role of Arab pressure. Pressure on African states, at the bilateral and multilateral level, to change their position toward Israel had clearly been evident for

several years before October 1973. Indeed, as early as the Casablanca conference in 1961, the Arab states had been intent on undermining Israel's presence in Africa. The Arabs had been active at international meetings, and especially in the OAU, in calling upon the Africans to show solidarity with their cause and break off relations with Israel. This pressure was particularly prominent at the OAU summit in May 1973 and the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in September 1973. It intensified during the weeks of the war itself.

Pressure was not only exerted in multilateral forums but at the bilateral level as well. The years between 1967 and 1973 witnessed a considerable increase in Arab diplomacy in Africa. Libya and Saudi Arabia played a notable role in persuading some African states to change their policy toward Israel. Between 1970 and 1973 eight African leaders visited Tripoli seeking aid and support from Colonel Qaddafi. In November 1972, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia made an official visit to Uganda, Chad, Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania. The communique issued at the end of the visits to these states condemned Israel and demanded its immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories.<sup>9</sup> Shortly after Faisal's departure from Ndjamena, Chad's President Tombalbaye broke off relations with Israel. Libya was also in a position to exert political pressure on Chad; the Frolinat rebels in the north of the Chad received most of their material support from the Libyan government. In September 1971, Tombalbaye had even broken off relations with Libya, accusing Qaddafi, at the time, of aiding an attempted coup against his regime. Faced with a promise by Qaddafi to stop supplying the rebel forces and close their bases in Libya, together with offer of financial rewards, Tombalbaye found no difficulty in breaking with Israel. At the beginning of January, one month after Chad, Niger severed its ties with Israel.

Another country where the Arabs were in a position to exert specific pressure was Ethiopia. Many Arab states had identified themselves with the aims of the Eritreans in their struggle with the Ethiopian government and extended them both ideological and material support. The Eritrean Liberation Front maintained offices and received training in several Arab states while Libya was the main source of finances and arms for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front.<sup>10</sup> In May 1973, Colonel Qaddafi called on African states to boycott the OAU's tenth anniversary summit in Addis Ababa and demanded that the headquarters of the OAU be removed from Addis Ababa unless Ethiopia severed its links with Israel. Although President Sadat distanced himself from Qaddafi's tactics, he nonetheless

took the opportunity of warning Haile Selassie to lower the level of his relations with Israel. President Boumedienne of Algeria went even further. In confidential discussions with Ethiopian leaders at the summit in Addis Ababa he offered to use his influence in Arab circles to halt support for the Eritrean nationalists provided that Ethiopia renounced its friendship with Israel.<sup>11</sup> Although Haile Selassie, at that time, firmly resisted these pressures, the Ethiopian Emperor was left in no doubt of the detrimental cost of being so closely associated with Israel.

Boumedienne also embarked on a diplomatic campaign to promote the Arab's cause in Africa. In the spring of 1972, he made an official visit to Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Senegal, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville and Madagascar. During the Yom Kippur War itself, Boumedienne sent a personal message to sixteen heads of state who had not severed relations with Israel encouraging them to do so.<sup>12</sup>

Diplomatic pressures were combined with financial incentives. When President Amin of Uganda broke relations with Israel in March 1972, he was promised \$30 million by Qaddafi. He was also offered a \$15 million interest-free loan by Saudi Arabia.<sup>13</sup> Following a three-day visit by President Tombalbaye to Tripoli in December 1972, it was reported that Chad was to receive \$92 million in loans from Libya.<sup>14</sup> During King Faisal's visit to Africa at the end of 1972, Tombalbaye and President Diiori of Niger received assurances of aid from Saudi Arabia. Likewise, in 1972, Senegal was offered \$50 million in development loans from Libya.<sup>15</sup> When Burundi established diplomatic relations with Libya, in April 1973, it was assured of moral and material support from Qaddafi. Shortly afterwards, Burundi announced the severance of its ties with Israel. The relationship between the role of Saudi Arabia and Libya and the decision of these African states to sever their ties with Israel was noted by the *New York Times* in January 1973:

Responding to Arab pressures and in some cases the promise of huge cash loans from Libya and Saudi Arabia, both wealthy from oil, five African states have severed relations with Israel in the past ten months...Libyan pressure and the lure of Libyan loans are thought to have been the major motive behind the decisions of Chad and Niger, for example, and to a lesser extent that of Uganda. In each case the break with Israel has been followed by a public announcement of large loans and cash grants from either Libya or Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup>

The potential financial benefits to be gained from breaking with Israel were not lost on the African leaders either. 'There is a direct rapport,' President Mobutu pointed out, 'between the break in relations between certain African nations and Israel and Libyan aid.'<sup>17</sup> While the African states strongly denied that Arab pressure forced them to break off ties with Israel, Qaddafi was quick to claim credit. 'Libya has succeeded within two years in isolating Israel from Africa', he boasted, 'seventeen African countries severed their relations with the Jewish state due to our efforts.'<sup>18</sup>

The Arabs also appealed to Muslim communities in Africa to express opposition to ties with Israel and for African states to break off relations as an act of Islamic solidarity. A large degree of Arab aid and pressure was directed toward African states with sizeable Islamic populations. Muslim groups within African states were encouraged to put pressure on their governments to sever links with Israel. Arab propaganda at times even accused Israel of distributing false copies of the Koran in Africa.<sup>19</sup> King Faisal, for one, utilized this religious factor in his diplomacy in Africa. Before embarking on his visit to Africa he announced that he hoped not only to strengthen the Arab influence on the continent but also to tie the Muslims to the Holy Lands and to consolidate the Muslim influence in Africa.<sup>20</sup>

Islam offered a special focus of attention since it was an important and increasingly influential force, especially in the northern half of the continent. Over 100 million Muslims live in sub-Saharan Africa and at least 75 per cent of the populations of Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal are Muslim. Muslim communities also form a substantial (25 – 40 per cent), and an extremely influential, sector of the population in Cameroon, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.<sup>21</sup> Despite the considerable Muslim presence in sub-Saharan Africa, these cultural and religious linkages were not translated into closer political and economic ties with the Arab world. Though Islam has given rise to social and political systems in the Middle East, it is identified in Africa primarily as a cultural and spiritual phenomena and not as a political force. The African leaders actively resisted the appeals by the Arabs to Muslim groups in Africa to openly agitate and express opposition to contacts with Israel. Furthermore, they were fearful of the appeal to Islamic solidarity and for political agitation by their Muslim communities. Many African countries, already troubled by separatist movements and inter-tribal disputes, had no desire to see yet another another issue, in the form of religious tension, added to the existing divisions of their fissiparous societies. For instance, the open appeal, in the middle of the Yom



Kippur War, by the National Union of Kenya Muslims for its members to pray for the defeat of Israel caused widespread indignation in Kenya. In an editorial the *Daily Nation* protested:

The present conflict in the Arabs and Jews over their respective territories is not a threat to the Islamic faith. The position of the National Union of Kenya Muslims is divisive also because it puts a wedge between the Muslims and all the non-Muslims in this land.<sup>22</sup>

The fact that Muslim, Christian and traditional African religions coexisted in close proximity in the same territory led to the need to create and maintain an often delicate *modus vivendi*. Even in states where the majority of the population were Muslim, there was opposition to any expression of Pan-Islamic solidarity and a reluctance to make Islam the state religion for fears of disturbing the *status quo*.

Coupled with this desire to avoid the politicization of religious communities was the parallel tendency not to associate Islam in Africa with Arabism. The Senegalese stressed this point: 'We are predominantly a Moslem country but we are not Arabs, and while we sympathize with the Arabs we do share the same overall outlook.'<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, the African states refused to accept the portrayal of the situation in the Middle East as a religious conflict between Muslims and Jews. For them the Arab-Israeli dispute was a political conflict and not a question of religion.

There is little evidence that the issue of Islamic solidarity was an important factor in explaining the break in relations. Instead of having a positive effect, the use of Islam by the Arabs in their diplomacy actually reinforced many of the suspicions held by the Africans toward the Arabs. As a result, it encouraged many African leaders to maintain some distance from the Arabs. Rather than being a unifying factor, Islam has been a divisive element in Afro-Arab relations and in African politics. Political violence in Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan, for example, has been fuelled by an animosity between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamic solidarity has also been employed to bolster separatist movements.<sup>24</sup> The most that one can attribute to the Arab tactic of politicizing Islam is that it may have acted as a constraint upon some African states in the development of their relations with Israel.<sup>25</sup> It was not, however, a contributing factor in explaining the break. While Guinea, Chad and Niger and Mali, all countries with large Muslim populations, were among the first states to sever relations with Israel, predominantly Muslim Senegal was

one of the countries least willing to take such action and one of the last countries to do so.

To completely deny, as some have done, the role of the Arab states in the decision of the African states to sever their ties with Israel is clearly not in accordance with the events before 1973. Arab pressures on the Africans to distance themselves from Israel had been clearly evident for several years. Nor did they make any attempt to disguise their aims or their methods. It was not, however, until the early 1970s when the Arab states were able to combine these efforts with their new found wealth, that they were able to achieve any results on this issue. Furthermore, Arab pressures and the threat of the 'oil weapon' played a major role in October 1973 in forcing the major industrialized countries of the West to readjust their Middle East policies. To claim that the African states were impervious to these economic developments and that their action was motivated solely on ideological grounds and not by political expediency ascribes too much propriety to the Africans and the Arabs alike.

For some states the combination of financial inducements and political pressures were of paramount importance in their decision to break with Israel. But this is not a sufficient reason by itself to explain the action by all the African states. To claim that the Africans just 'sold out' or were 'bought off' by the Arabs is equally misrepresentative and ignores the existence of a number of other important factors. Though the severance of relations in October 1973 was dramatic, the decline in Israel's standing in Africa was not sudden. The deterioration of Israel's fortunes had taken root several years earlier. The years following the Six Day War of 1967 had witnessed a gradual shift in African attitudes toward Israel and the Arab-Israel conflict.

With the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War many African states felt compelled to express their support and solidarity with Egypt, a fellow African country. In 1967, most African states did not condemn Israel for its pre-emptive strike against Egypt. Moreover, they did not consider Israel's action to have constituted an act of aggression. Now, paradoxically, Israel was blamed for the outbreak of hostilities. Through its perceived refusal to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, the African states considered Israel responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. The importance attached in Africa to the principle of territorial integrity made Israel's continuing occupation of Arab land a particular concern for the Africans. Statements issued by African states in explaining their break with Israel were replete with expressions of solidarity with Egypt combined with a condemnation of Israel's occupation. Faced

with a choice, African states placed the issue of African solidarity with Egypt over friendship with Israel.

<sup>4</sup> This expression of solidarity with Egypt and the overriding commitment of the Africans to the principle of territorial integrity was clearly embodied by Emperor Haile Selassie in his keynote address to the extraordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting called to discuss the war in November 1973.

In demonstrating their solidarity with Egypt and other states whose territorial integrity has been violated, the OAU member states are committing themselves to uphold the fundamental principles of inter-state relations, without which there can be neither peace nor progress ... Africa cannot be assured of continued peace and progress if any part of our continent remains under foreign occupation and for that reason we view the continued imposition of foreign rule upon the occupied territories of Egypt and other Arab states as incompatible with the values we cherish as Africans.<sup>26</sup>

The positions of Ghana and Dahomey were also illustrative of the African commitment to the adherence of these principles. Dahomey's minister of the interior declared 'Africa is directly affected by the dangerous situation and the illegal presence of Israeli troops on a part of her territory.'<sup>27</sup> The government of Ghana stated that it could not remain insensitive to African feelings and objectives regarding the security and territorial integrity of member states of the OAU. 'The Government has therefore concluded', it announced, 'that continued diplomatic relations with Israel, which is in violation of the territory of an OAU member state is undesirable.'<sup>28</sup> For President Senghor of Senegal the situation was simple: 'Being an African, I understand the Egyptian position. Africa ends at the end of the Sinai Peninsula.'<sup>29</sup>

The Israeli occupation was the factor most frequently referred to in official explanations of the decision to break relations with Israel. Tanzania and Liberia referred to Israel's occupation of Arab territories as illegal. The Nigerian government not only called upon Israel to immediately withdraw from all the occupied territories but also expressed strong support for Egypt and the Arab countries for what it saw as their 'legitimate effort to recover their territories'.<sup>30</sup> Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, and Zaire, all regarded as close friends of Israel in Africa, declared that relations would remain severed for as long as Israel continued to occupy Arab land.

Israel's continued occupation of the Arab territories captured in 1967 clearly undermined its diplomatic position in Africa. In the resolutions adopted at the OAU, the Africans had repeatedly called upon Israel to withdraw from the territories. Israel's seemingly unwillingness to take such a step led to suspicions developing among the Africans that it was determined to remain in control of those territories. By 1972, such was their anger and distrust of Israel over this issue that they challenged it to declare its recognition of and commitment to the principle of the non-annexation of territories through the use of force.<sup>31</sup>

Several states explained they broke off relations because of Israel's refusal to obey UN and OAU resolutions. Others announced that they would only resume relations once it had complied with them. President Eyadema of Togo, for example, denounced Israel for its arrogance in defying UN resolutions.<sup>32</sup> Zambia announced that it had broken off relations because Israel had ignored the resolutions of both the United Nations and the OAU. Gabon urged Israel to accept resolution 242 as the only way to bring peace to the region.<sup>33</sup> Botswana, the last state to break relations with Israel, announced that it would not consider reestablishing relations until Israel had fully complied with the various UN resolutions on the Middle East and in particular with Resolution 242.<sup>34</sup> The African position on this matter was summed up in an article in *West Africa* during the Yom Kippur War. It argued that Israel's relations with African countries were unlikely to improve because it would continue to occupy the Arab territories in spite of the resolutions calling for its immediate withdrawal. 'Israel at the moment is not going to attach importance to resolutions' and it concluded '[they] feel that their own army, rather than UN votes they have in the past carefully cultivated, is their best defence.'<sup>35</sup>

Israeli violation of the UN ceasefire during the war was cited by both Senegal and Nigeria as a further reason for their decision to break with Israel. Accusing Israel of taking advantage of the ceasefire to consolidate its hold of Egyptian territory, the Nigerian government condemned Israel for breaking faith with Nigeria and the whole of Africa. 'By its violation of the UN cease-fire and occupation of more Egyptian territory [Israel] had shown itself unworthy of diplomatic relations.'<sup>36</sup>

Israel's victory in 1967 and its continued occupation of Arab territory led to a change in its image in Africa. Before 1967 Israel had been considered by many in Africa as a small country surrounded by hostile neighbours. Now it was condemned for its continued aggres-

sion against the Arabs. It was even regarded by many as an imperialist and expansionist power. For the Africans, Israel had become a powerful military force occupying the land of the Arabs. It was now seen as posing a threat not only to peace in the Middle East but also to the security of the African continent.<sup>37</sup>

Simultaneously the early African perception of Israel as a socialist society with a desire to be non-aligned and accepted as an integral part of the Third World had steadily evaporated. Instead, Israel became identified with the western world. The growing radicalization of various African leaders and countries and the disenchantment with the western world combined to make Israel's position on the continent all the more precarious. The breaking of relations with Israel was an easy way for African states to express their disillusionment with the west without suffering any serious consequences.<sup>38</sup>

Compounding Israel's difficulties in Africa was the constant attempt by the Arabs to link Israel with South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia and to equate Zionism with colonialism and apartheid. The Arabs assailed Israel and tried to portray it as being a major partner of racist and imperialist forces in the world and especially in Southern Africa. The Arabs in Israel were compared with the blacks in South Africa as being similar victims of racial and colonial discrimination. President Boumedienne of Algeria disparaged the Africans for their attitude and concern toward racism in Southern Africa while ignoring the issue in the Middle East. The Soviet Union also tried to undermine Israel's position in Africa by linking it with South Africa. It claimed that they shared, 'a common racist ideology and practise, aimed against the Arabs in one instance and the Africans in the other'.<sup>39</sup> It also attacked Israel as being an agent of imperialism in activities in Africa:

Israel's rulers have proved to be faithful stooges of world imperialism. In infiltrating the developing countries so as to split the anti-imperialist forces, Tel Aviv has been carrying out the policies dictated by its US and other patrons.<sup>40</sup>

The Congo announced that it broke off its relations with Israel as a 'reaction to the policy of imperialist expansion conducted by Israel'. President Ngouabi identified Israel as an enemy of the Congo along with the United States, Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia.<sup>41</sup>

The decision of the Portuguese government to allow the United States to use the Azores to refuel its airlift of supplies to Israel during the Yom Kippur War and the rumours that South Africa had actively

assisted the Israeli air force, helped to further undermine Israel's position in this respect. At the OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa to discuss the war, Israel was condemned for its 'open military collusion' with Portugal and South Africa and was accused of coordinating its strategy with South Africa as part of a grand design aimed at encircling and dominating the continent'.<sup>42</sup>

Israel's relationship with South Africa has frequently been raised as an important factor in the Africans decision to sever their ties with Israel. It is often believed that the break was a response of the growing concern amongst the African states over Israel's military and economic collaboration with South Africa.<sup>43</sup> An examination of the relations between the two countries shows, however, that there is little basis to this line of reasoning. Israel's relations with South Africa before the break in relations were marginal and at times extremely problematic and unfriendly. They did not have any substantial impact on the development of Israel's relations with the Black African states. On the contrary, the opposite was the case. The nature of the diplomatic and political relationship with South Africa, during this period, fluctuated in response to Israel's desire to expand its relations and influence in Africa.

Relations between Israel and South Africa date back to 1948. South Africa was one of the first countries to recognize Israel and in 1953 Daniel Malan was the first Prime Minister to visit Jerusalem. However, during the first decade of Israel's statehood, the scope of its contacts with South Africa were minimal. Israel did not open an embassy in South Africa but maintained a legation in Pretoria and a consulate in Johannesburg. South Africa, in order to promote relations with the Arab world, chose to be represented in Tel Aviv by the British embassy.

With its decision at the start of the 1960s to develop ties in Africa, Israel began to voice its opposition to apartheid and vote in favour of resolutions critical of South Africa at the United Nations. When the President of Upper Volta, Maurice Yameogo, visited Jerusalem in July 1961 a joint statement was issued condemning the South African governments' policy of racial discrimination.<sup>44</sup> In 1963, as its relations and friendships with Black African states flourished, Israel unilaterally withdrew all its senior diplomats from Pretoria. Israel's willingness to lend its support to the cause of the African states culminated in its vote in 1966 at the United Nations to relieve South Africa of its mandate over Namibia.

Israel's victory in the Six Day War in 1967 led to a visible improvement in the atmosphere of its relations with South Africa. The

general reaction in South Africa to Israel's victory was one of admiration at the speed and the completeness of Israel's defeat of the Arabs. An immediate result of the improved atmosphere between the two countries was the expansion of a series of economic links. The exchange of a number trade and commercial delegations led to a marked increase in the volume of trade and the development of a number joint commercial ventures. By 1973 the level of trade had risen to to \$44.1 million with the balance clearly in the favour of South Africa. Israel's imports from South Africa stood at \$32.4 million while exports from Israel from amounted to \$11.9 million. However, even with this increase in the volume of trade, it is important to note this figure accounted for less than one per cent of Israel's overall trade. Moreover, South Africa was neither regarded as a vital nor an important trading partner. Black Africa was seen as having a greater potential as an export market for Israel.<sup>45</sup>

Nor did the development of commercial ties lead to an improvement of relations at the political level. Israel continued to openly condemn South Africa at various international meetings. In an effort to bolster its position in Africa and emphasis its continued opposition to the system of apartheid in South Africa, Israel even offered, in April 1971, to make a financial contribution to the OAU African Liberation Committee. In spite of repeated requests by the South African government, Israel consistently refused to upgrade the level of its representation in Pretoria.

Israel's ties with South Africa cannot be considered as an important factor to the demise of its fortunes in Africa. Neither the resolutions adopted by the OAU on the Middle East nor on South Africa made any reference to this issue. It was not until November 1973, after the break in relations, that the OAU passed its first resolution which included any condemnation of the links between Israel and South Africa. Nowhere in the statements issued by the African states was Israel's relations with South Africa mentioned as a reason for their decision to break off relations. Likewise the African press was silent on this issue. The only African state to refer to this issue was Zaire. During his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in which he renounced his friendship with Israel, President Mobutu condemned Israel for betraying its African friends by allowing Dr. Connie Mulder, the South African minister of the interior to visit Jerusalem.<sup>46</sup> However, neither Mulder's visit nor the issue of Israel's ties with South Africa were the critical factor behind Zaire's decision. For Mobutu, the expression of solidarity with Egypt was of far more importance.

Finally, for some African states the decision to break relations did not arise out of their concern with the relative merits of the Middle East conflict but rather from their own national interests and, flowing from these, their wider African associations. Their action resulted out of the need to display African unity, and not the desire to show support for the Arabs. The mass severance of diplomatic relations was a dramatic display of continental unity. It is not possible to explain Israel's setback in Africa without reference to to the Pan-African sentiments and the reality of a unified African foreign policy that was expressed in October 1973.<sup>47</sup> The imperatives of displaying African unity was of particular relevance for Israel's closest friends in Africa, most of whom were among the last to renounce their ties. Liberia, which did not break with Israel until the beginning of November, declared that the maintenance of diplomatic relations with Israel was no longer in harmony with African unity and solidarity.<sup>48</sup>

At first, several states were reluctant to break off relations with Israel. President Senghor had even been critical of those states which had done so. However, as the list of those who had broken relations grew, those refusing to do so became increasingly exposed and isolated. Political necessities in the face of regional and continental pressures could not be ignored. In West Africa, for example, Houphouët-Boigny could not comfortably maintain his close relations with Israel once all the other OCAM states had broken their ties. A Liberian diplomat alluded to the difficulties Israel's African friends faced in confronting the problem of being isolated within Africa over this issue. 'If others had stood with us then we could have withstood the pressures', he confided to Israeli officials, 'but we couldn't do it alone.'<sup>49</sup>

The political costs being isolated within Africa over the question of relations with Israel was particularly apparent in the cases of Ethiopia and Nigeria. Haile Selassie, who had successfully blocked an attempt by Libya to remove the headquarters of the OAU from Addis Ababa in May, recognized that it would be increasingly difficult to resist future challenges if he still maintained close relations with Israel. Once the vast majority of the Black African states had broken relations with Israel he was painfully aware that he would not be able to rely on their continued support. Given the importance that he attached to Ethiopia's and to his own prestige in Africa, he chose to join the bandwagon.

Once Ethiopia had announced its decision to break relations, attention was focussed on Nigeria. Pressure came from both the

Arabs and from within the country. The *New Nigerian* asserted that a break with Israel was the only action consistent with Nigeria's national experience and leadership of the OAU. At the annual reading from the Koran in Kaduna the Grand Qadi of the northern states, Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, assured the Arabs that they had the full support of Nigerians. There was also strong pressure from senior army officers in the north for a break with Israel.<sup>50</sup> At the beginning of the war General Gowon was opposed to the idea of breaking off relations and even went as far as to blame both sides for the outbreak of hostilities. Gowon argued that the most responsible policy for African leaders was to be in a position from which they could act as mediators between Israel and the Arabs. Two weeks later, however, as the rush to break relations was gathering pace, Gowon was forced to retreat from this position. With the majority of the African states rapidly renouncing their friendship with Israel, Gowon, as the current Chairman of the OAU, could no longer remain neutral on this issue. The OAU had become an important instrument for the realization of many of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives in Africa. After its passivity in the 1960s, the start of the 1970s had seen a notable increase in Nigeria's diplomacy in Africa. Nigeria's leaders now sought to take a prominent position in African politics. In its bid for leadership in Africa, Nigeria could not afford to hold a position that was out of line with the rest of the continent. The cost of maintaining ties with Israel, at the expense of its broader and regional objectives led Nigeria to abandon Israel.

Thus, the reversal of Israel's position in Africa was a result of the interplay of several diverse and separate factors. Though the process of severing relations was under way before the outbreak of hostilities in October, it was the war that served as the catalyst for the break by the majority of the African states. The Yom Kippur War once again focussed attention on the Middle East and the dangers the conflict posed to world peace. It bought to a head the steadily growing dissatisfaction in Africa over relations with Israel and its policies in the Middle East. While some states might still have broken off ties with Israel, it is highly unlikely that the mass severance of relations would have taken place but for the war. Of particular concern to the Africans was Israel's continuing occupation of Egyptian and Arab land which it had captured in the Six Day War. Before 1967 the Africans had refused to discuss the Middle East at the meetings of the OAU. The Egyptian defeat and the loss of the Sinai Peninsula had forced the Africans to confront the issue. The resolutions passed at the OAU meetings became successively more and more supportive

of Egypt and critical of Israel and its continuing occupation. By the time of the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War many African states felt that they had to take action against Israel in support for Egypt, a fellow African state. It was this concern, above all, which led the Africans to renounce their ties with Israel. Expressions of support for Egypt combined with sentiments of African solidarity are to be found in nearly all the communiqués and statements issued by African states.

African concern with the Middle East conflict at this juncture centred primarily around the question of support for Egypt. OAU resolutions on the Middle East refer first and foremost to Israel's occupation and aggression against Egyptian territory and only then to its occupation of the land of other Arab states. The OAU peace mission to the Middle East in 1971 was designed to help reactivate the indirect talks between Israel and Egypt under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring. The African states were not concerned in trying to provide a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem. Furthermore, it is important to note that there was little mention, at this time, of any support for the Palestinians in their struggle for self-determination and no mention at all of support for the PLO. The rights of the Palestinians were not mentioned in any OAU resolution until May 1973.<sup>51</sup> Even then the resolution only obliquely refers to the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and makes no mention of their quest for statehood.

The turning point for Israel's fortunes followed the breakdown of the OAU peace mission in 1971. Israel emerged from this attempt at mediation by the Africans more harmed than helped. While Egypt was praised for its positive response toward the African initiative and the resumption of the Jarring mission, Israel was blamed for its failure. Of particular concern to the Africans was Israel's seemingly intransigent attitude and its unwillingness to return the occupied territories. The resolutions passed by the OAU after 1971 became particularly critical of Israel. Israel's friends in Africa were no longer prepared to defend it in face of the mounting Arab attacks. Pro-Israeli sentiment in Africa was rapidly eroding. Israel's image had now changed from the underdog to that of the aggressor. By 1973 the maintenance of close and friendly ties with Israel had become increasingly problematic and untenable in many African capitals.

Given the numerous objective advantages that the Arabs held over Israel in Africa, it is a tribute to Israel's diplomacy that it managed to sustain as large a presence for as long as it did. Israel enjoyed an influence in Africa far greater than its resources and international



position should have allowed. Nonetheless, there were indications right from the start that the Africans would be prepared to sacrifice their friendship and condemn Israel for the sake of broader regional, continental and international goals. The willingness of Ghana, Guinea and Mali to sign the hostile communique issued at the end of the Casablanca conference in 1961 was an early sign of the future difficulties that Israel was to encounter at the multilateral level in its relations with Africa.

The creation of the OAU in 1963 gave the Arab states of Africa the opportunity to exploit fully their advantages over Israel. Their participation in meetings of the Organization allowed them to repeatedly challenge the Africans over their relations with Israel and press them for support. According to Ali Mazrui, the OAU soon became a mechanism by which the Arabs could politically influence the Black African states.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the Arabs indicated that the level of their support for the decolonization process in Southern Africa and for developmental issues in Africa was dependent upon African support over the question of Israel.

A confidential internal report of the Ghanaian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, written three years before the break in relations, highlights the precarious nature of Israel's position in Africa:

Our true interests lie with a strong OAU in which the Arab north plays a vital part ... Our economic interests with Israel therefore are not natural and can be sacrificed. It is they who need us more.<sup>53</sup>

In conclusion, no one factor is sufficient by itself to explain adequately the reversal of Israel's fortunes in Africa and the mass break in diplomatic relations in 1973. For some states, Arab pressure, or Israel's occupation or the show of support for Egypt, might have had a more immediate and particular salience than for others. However, for African states as a whole, all these factors were necessary and important as part of the process that led to the dramatic change in their position toward Israel and their complete show of solidarity with the Arabs.

Israel suffered ultimately in Africa because it could not compete diplomatically, politically and financially with the Arabs in the years preceding 1973. It was President Senghor who bluntly expressed Israel's predicament and comparative disadvantage with the Arabs: 'The Arabs have the numbers, space and oil. In the Third World they outweigh Israel.'<sup>54</sup>

## Notes

1. *Le Monde*, 29 November, 1973.
2. See for example: Victor T. Le Vine and Timothy W. Luke, *The Arab-African Connection: Political and Economic Realities* (1979), pp. 2-18.
3. Adeoye Akinsanya, 'The Afro-Arab Alliance: Dream or Reality', *African Affairs*, 75, 301, 1976, p. 525.
4. See Arye Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict* (1987), pp. 131-48. and Colin Legum, 'Africa, Arabs and Oil' in *Africa Contemporary Record 1974-75* (1975), pp. A102-13.
5. *Haaretz*, 2 November, 1973.
6. See for example Anthony Sylvester, *Arabs and Africans* (1981), p. 200.
7. Ali Mazrui, 'Black Africa and the Arabs', *Foreign Affairs*, 53, 4, 1975, pp. 736-8.
8. Zdenek Cervenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity* (1977), p. 162.
9. *Africa Research Bulletin*, December, 1972, p. 2676.
10. See Haggai Ehrlich, *The Struggle over Eritrea, 1962-1978* (1983), pp. 55-80.
11. See Colin Legum, 'Africa, the Arabs and the Middle East' in *Africa Contemporary Record, 1973-74* (1974), pp. A4-5.
12. See *International Documents on Palestine 1973* (1976), p. 492. The message was sent to Botswana, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Zambia.
13. *Africa Research Bulletin* (Economic, Financial and Technical Series), 10, August, 1972, p. 2433.
14. *New York Times*, 8 April, 1973.
15. *New York Times*, 19 March, 1972.
16. *New York Times*, 12 January, 1973.
17. Philippe Decraene, 'Is the Romance with Israel Over?' *Africa Report*, 18, May-June, 1973, p. 20.
18. Interview with Colonel Qaddafi in *Le Monde*, 22 October, 1973.
19. 'Sola Ojo, 'The Arab-Israeli Conflict and Afro-Arab Relations' in Timothy M. Shaw and 'Sola Ojo (eds.), *Africa and the International System* (1982), pp. 141-2.
20. Middle East News Agency (MENA), 23 October, 1972. For a discussion of Arab Islamic activity in Africa see Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict* (1987), pp. 33-54.

21. See Lansine Kaba, 'Islam's Advance in Tropical Africa', *Africa Report*, 21, March-April, 1976, pp. 37-41 and J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa* (1980).
22. *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 17 October, 1973.
23. *New York Times*, 19 March, 1973.
24. See Dunstan Wai, 'African-Arab Relations: Interdependence or Misplaced Optimism?', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21, 2, 1983, pp. 189-92.
25. A good example was Nigeria, which because of the opposition of Northern, Muslim, leaders did not open an embassy in Israel.
26. *Africa Research Bulletin*, November, 1973, p. 3039.
27. *Jerusalem Post*, 12 October, 1973.
28. *Ghanaian Times*, 29 October, 1973.
29. Leopold Senghor, 'Africans, Arabs, Israelis : A Triad of Suffering Peoples', *Africa Report*, 17, 1972, p. 12.
30. *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1973-74, p. C81.
31. OAU Document, AHG/Res. 67 (IX). Rabat, June, 1972.
32. *Africa Contemporary Record* 1973-74, p. B775.
33. *Africa Research Bulletin*, October, 1973, p. 3023.
34. *Jerusalem Post*, 14 November, 1973.
35. *West Africa*, 15 October, 1973, p. 1443.
36. *African and Asian Media Survey: African and Asian Attitudes on the Middle East Conflict* (1975), pp. 23-24.
37. See OAU Document, AHG/Res. 70 (X). Addis Ababa, May, 1973.
38. See Cervenka, *Unfinished Quest for Unity*, p. 162 and Susan A. Gitelson, 'Israel's African Setback in Perspective' in Michael Curtis and Susan A. Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, (1976), pp. 187-88 and *Jerusalem Post*, 20 November, 1973.
39. Y. Kashin, 'Israeli Designs in Africa', *International Affairs*, (Moscow), 2, February, 1972, p. 65.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
41. *Africa Research Bulletin*, December, 1972, p. 2705.
42. OAU Document, ECM/Res. 20 (VIII). Addis Ababa, November, 1973.
43. See Cervenka, *Unfinished Quest for Unity*, p. 162, James Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance* (1984), p. 14 and Mazrui, *Africa International Relations*, pp. 136-42.
44. Quoted in *Israel versus Apartheid* (1985), p. 10.
45. See Gitelson, 'Israel's African Setback', p. 186.

46. *Jerusalem Post*, 5 October, 1973. Mulder's trip to Israel was not an official visit but a private one.
47. See Legum, 'Africa, the Arabs and the Middle East', p. A3 and Miller, 'African-Israeli Relations', pp. 393-408.
48. Quoted in Gitelson, 'Israel's African Setback', p. 195.
49. *New York Times*, 6 November, 1973.
50. See Olusola Ojo, 'Nigeria and Israel', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 8, 1, 1986, p. 88.
51. See OAU Document, AHG/Res. 70 (X). Addis Ababa, May, 1973.
52. See Mazrui, *Africa International Relations* (1977), p. 151.
53. *Internal Policy Paper on Major World Issues*, Ministry of External Affairs, Accra, Ghana. (mimeo).
54. Quoted in Benjamin Rivlin and Jacques Fromerand, 'Changing Third World Perspectives and Policies Towards Israel' in Curtis and Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, p. 347.

## 4

### The Abandoned Friendship: Relations in the Absence of Formal Ties, 1974-77

The breaking of diplomatic relations by the African states was carried out, with the exception of a few cases, without hostility and in a spirit of regret on the part of the African leaders. Often, it was accompanied by apologies and with declarations of friendship. Most African states maintained, somewhat paradoxically, that the severing of diplomatic ties did not signify any basic change in their favourable attitude toward Israel. Furthermore, the Africans asked Israel to continue sending experts to work on the technical assistance programmes and expand its economic links in their countries. An example of this goodwill was expressed by President Mobutu of Zaire. When the Israeli ambassador went to pay his farewell visit, Mobutu told him to disregard the reports of any deterioration in the relations between the two countries.<sup>1</sup>

Israel did not react with such equanimity to the African assurances that the break in diplomatic ties need not signify a major Afro-Israeli disengagement. The African action was received in Israel with shock and dismay. Abba Eban called Zaire's decision a 'gross betrayal of international friendship and goodwill'.<sup>2</sup> Many in Israel began to look upon the whole African venture as a waste of time, money and effort; a messianic movement that was taken far too seriously and one that was bound to fail the moment the Arabs applied any real pressure. Voices were immediately raised in Israel questioning the wisdom and value of its African policy. The religious newspaper *Hatzofe* reflected this attitude:

One of Israel's diplomatic errors was its great effort to establish close ties with the African states without first establishing whether these regimes were stable and mature enough to make the effort worthwhile. Careful consideration would have shown that the enormous sums spent in developing Africa would have been put to infinitely better use in absorbing immigrants and closing the social gap in Israel.<sup>3</sup>

The general tendency which overestimated Israel's role as a major donor of aid on the continent and had inflated its importance to the African states resulted in an exaggerated sense of betrayal. Israelis were angered by what they saw as an act of ingratitude by the Africans. The mass break in relations was seen as a blow to Israel's prestige and morale. Coming as it did during the Yom Kippur War only added to the feeling of bitterness and rejection. 'This mad rush to disown us does not reflect honour on the African states', *Ha'aretz* declared, 'Israel will not forget who broke relations with it during difficult times'.<sup>4</sup> The *Jerusalem Post* expressed a similar sentiment. 'Those links will never be the same again. The taste of betrayal at a time of crisis will remain.'<sup>5</sup>

The break in diplomatic relations did not result in a total Israeli withdrawal from Africa. In Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Kenya it maintained an interest office in order to facilitate contacts. In other countries its interests were represented by a foreign embassy.<sup>6</sup> In the absence of formal ties a whole new set of relations were developed. An immediate consequence of the break in relations was the termination of the Israeli aid programme in Africa. Though the Africans asked Israel to continue with its assistance projects and to carry on sending experts to work in their countries, the idea of aiding countries that had just severed diplomatic ties was politically untenable. In some cases, the projects were completed; in most the experts were withdrawn immediately. In the year preceding the break in ties, Israel sent 236 experts to work on a variety of short- and long-term projects in twenty-five African countries.<sup>7</sup> (See Table 4.1) In 1974, this number declined to as few as 51 experts who were now involved with projects in only five states. This marked drop in the number of experts sent to work in Africa can be seen best by comparing the figures for the month of April in 1973 and in 1974. During April 1973 there were 80 Israelis working throughout the continent. One year later there were only thirteen Israeli experts in Africa. Most of them were working in Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland; countries that still maintained diplomatic relations with Israel. In those countries that had severed ties, eleven experts were still involved in training youth in the Ivory Coast and five were running agricultural projects in the Central African Republic.<sup>8</sup> The change in the direction of the Israeli aid programme can be also be gauged by comparing the figures of experts sent to Africa with the number working in Latin America and Asia. In 1973, 236 Israeli experts out of a total of 559 working in the Third World, approximately 40 per cent, were involved in projects in Africa.

TABLE 4.1: ISRAELI EXPERTS WORKING IN AFRICA, 1973

	Short-term	Long-term
TOTAL	367	192
AFRICA	130	106
C.A.R.	1	3
Cameroon	-	5
Dahomey	1	5
Ethiopia	19	19
Gabon	2	1
Gambia	1	-
Ghana	10	2
Ivory Coast	20	20
Kenya	21	5
Liberia	5	2
Lesotho	7	1
Nigeria	7	4
Madagascar	3	2
Malawi	6	10
Mauritius	3	1
Rwanda	-	4
Sierra Leone	2	1
Senegal	2	3
Swaziland	7	2
Tanzania	1	-
Togo	1	2
Upper Volta	4	2
Zaire	3	2
Zambia	4	9

Source: *Report of the Activities of Department of International Cooperation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 1973. (Hebrew)

TABLE 4.2: ISRAELI EXPERTS WORKING IN AFRICA, 1974-77

	1974		1975		1976		1977	
	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term
Total - World	359	126	274	102	256	80	344	63
Africa	24	27	20	15	14	15	12	14
Lesotho	9	3	3	3	5	4	1	3
Malawi	6	6	11	6	5	6	3	5
Swaziland	9	2	6	2	4	2	1	3
C.A.R.	-	5	-	4	-	3	-	3
Ghana	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Ivory Coast	-	11	-	-	-	-	3	-
Kenya	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Togo	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Upper Volta	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

Source: Figures compiled from *Report of the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation 1974-77*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel.

During the year after the break the proportion of Israelis sent to Africa had dropped to just over 10 per cent. (See Table 4.2) This decline continued in 1975 and 1976. By 1976 there were only 29 Israelis working in four countries; the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland. Of the 256 Israeli experts involved with short-term projects in the Third World that year, only 14 were sent to Africa.<sup>9</sup> Indicative of the demise of the aid programme in Africa was the absence of Israeli experts working on agricultural projects. In the 1960s, Israeli agricultural projects had been the most prominent aspect of its aid programme. These projects were to be found throughout the Africa. The figures for 1975-76 clearly show the degree to which Israel had reduced the level of its assistance to African states. Of all the Israeli agricultural experts serving abroad, only 3.4 per cent were helping with projects in Africa.<sup>10</sup>

The proportion of Israelis sent to Africa dropped yet again in 1977. Out of a total 344 experts working on short-term assignments in the Third World, only 12 were found in Africa. Despite this low number, there was, however, a notable development in that year. For the first time since 1973 Israel was willing to send experts to advise on

programmes in, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Togo and Upper Volta, countries with which it did not maintain diplomatic relations.<sup>11</sup>

As well as the withdrawal of the Israeli aid programmes there was a sharp fall in the number of African students attending courses run in Israel. Unlike the assistance projects which were abandoned with the break in diplomatic ties, the Africans remained in Israel to complete their courses. The African states did not recall their students, nor did Israel ask them to leave. While Israel was not prepared to send experts to work in countries that had broken off diplomatic relations it was still prepared to train students from those countries. In February 1974 ten students from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria completed a course in regional planning at the Settlement Study Centre in Rehovot. By April, however, there were only 29 African studying in Israel. During the whole of 1974 only 88 African trainees participated in courses, a stark contrast to the 340 students that had arrived in Israel in the year before the break.<sup>12</sup> A similar number of trainees came to Israel in 1975 and 1976. Before 1973 the majority of Third World students studying in Israel arrived from Africa. Now African students accounted for less than 10 per cent of the total number of overseas students in Israel. Not until 1977 did the number of students begin to show any increase. (See Table 4.3)

Though there was a significant drop in the number of students arriving from Africa during these four years, it is notable that no less than twenty of the countries that had severed diplomatic ties in 1973 continued to send students to receive training in Israel. The list of these countries makes interesting and at times surprising reading. Regardless of their political alignment, religious composition or ideological stance African states were still interested in assistance from Israel. Included in the list are many of Israel's most vocal critics during this period. While the Africans were publicly denouncing Israel at the OAU and the United Nations, and when they were calling for steps to isolate it from the international community, they still regarded it as a valued partner in the field of development.

Trade was not affected by the break in diplomatic ties. Before 1973 the economic links that had been developed were the least important aspect of Israel's relationship with the African states. Exports to Africa amounted to only 4-5 per cent of the total volume of Israeli exports and the import of Israeli goods was a minute fraction of the African states' total imports. Ethiopia, geographically the closest country to Israel, attained the highest proportion in this respect. Its import of products from Israel accounted for approximately 2.5 per cent of its total import and its export to Israel amounted to 1.5 per

cent of its total. The other East African countries imported only 1 per cent of their total import of goods from Israel, and for other countries such as the Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Zaire, trade with Israel accounted for less than half of one per cent of their overall total.<sup>13</sup>

**TABLE 4.3: AFRICAN TRAINEES IN ISRAEL, 1975-77:**

	1975	1976	1977
Total	833	944	939
Africa	80	94	143
Angola	-	-	2
Benin	-	5	-
Botswana	-	1	-
C.A.R	-	6	5
Chad	1	-	-
Ethiopia	7	-	2
Ghana	11	-	18
Ivory Coast	-	3	4
Kenya	4	8	32
Lesotho	21	25	18
Nigeria	4	7	10
Madagascar	-	-	2
Malawi	1	-	-
Mauritius	3	4	6
Sierra Leone	4	-	9
Senegal	1	1	-
Swaziland	22	15	17
Tanzania	-	-	5
Togo	1	7	5
Uganda	-	2	1
Upper Volta	-	4	6
Zaire	-	4	-
Zambia	-	-	1

Source: Figures compiled from *Report of the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, 1975, 1976 and 1977 (Hebrew).

Before 1973, there was a vast disproportionate relationship between the array of activities in the political, military and aid spheres and Israel's achievement in developing an economic relationship with the African countries.

Following the severing of political ties and the withdrawal of the aid programmes, trade and economic links became the dominant, and in many cases, the sole aspect, of Israel's ties with Africa. Exports to Africa showed a steady increase. By 1977 the volume of exports was double the level for 1973. The bulk of this economic activity centred around the more politically and economically important of the states on the continent. (See Tables 4.4 and 4.5) Close to 100 companies, some of them the largest and most important in Israel, became involved in a variety of commercial ventures in African states. By far the most active Israeli company was the Histadrut owned conglomerate Koor Industries which operated in Africa through its trading company Alda and exported to twenty countries on the continent. In the absence of official representation and commercial attaches, Elda provided services as the middleman and the import-export agent for other smaller Israeli companies. An ad hoc situation thus arose wherein the heads of Israeli firms in African capitals became the de facto representatives of Israel and met, in an unofficial capacity, with

**TABLE 4.4: ISRAEL'S EXPORTS TO AFRICA (US\$ million)**

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Africa	42.7	69.7	73.5	69.8	81.0
South Africa	12.0	28.7	34.7	26.7	23.9
Black Africa	30.7	41.0	38.8	43.1	57.1
C.A.R.	-	-	-	-	-
Ethiopia	4.0	5.5	4.4	7.6	9.9
Gabon	0.3	0.6	1.2	0.6	2.0
Ghana	2.4	5.5	2.0	1.8	1.7
Ivory Coast	4.9	0.8	4.2	1.9	3.4
Kenya	3.0	5.8	3.8	6.8	6.6
Liberia	1.5	0.3	2.6	3.7	0.2
Nigeria	5.6	7.3	13.4	13.7	18.6
Tanzania	1.3	2.6	1.9	3.5	4.1
Zambia	3.5	5.7	4.2	1.9	2.8
Other Countries	3.8	6.9	1.1	1.4	7.8

Source: Compiled from *Foreign Trade Statistics*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.



**TABLE 4.5: ISRAEL'S IMPORTS FROM AFRICA (US\$ million)**

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Africa	56.6	85.9	67.7	61.2	76.4
South Africa	27.5	38.4	40.2	44.9	51.9
Black Africa	29.1	47.5	27.5	16.3	24.5
C.A.R.	6.1	4.6	5.9	-	-
Ethiopia	4.4	4.6	5.6	4.5	4.5
Gabon	1.9	1.8	4.8	4.8	6.1
Ghana	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	1.7
Ivory Coast	1.9	1.9	1.8	3.2	5.7
Kenya	6.2	6.8	2.9	1.0	1.8
Liberia	3.8	3.4	2.3	-	2.6
Nigeria	0.1	0.6	-	-	-
Tanzania	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.5	1.1
Zambia	-	-	-	0.2	0.4
Other Countries	4.2	22.8	2.9	1.2	0.6

Source: Compiled from *Foreign Trade Statistics*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.

political leaders, diplomats and businessmen.<sup>14</sup> The bulk of Israel's exports to Africa consisted of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, agricultural products and machinery, irrigation appliances and electronic equipment. In return, Israel imported mainly primary products such as timber, coffee, and groundnuts. Israeli companies also became heavily involved in infrastructure development throughout the continent building government offices, public housing projects, industrial developments, roads and and sewage and irrigation projects. The vast bulk of these contractual activities were undertaken by Israel's largest construction company Solel Boneh which built hundreds of miles of roads in Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria, government offices in the Ivory Coast and army barracks in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> Among other companies that became involved in Africa were Tahal in water engineering, Agridau in agricultural development and Federman Brothers in hotel building.

The years immediately after the break in diplomatic ties saw the development of a number of new and extremely profitable economic exchanges between Israel and Africa. The rapid expansion of these commercial links and investments and the change in the nature of Israel's involvement on the continent was noted by the Nigerian journal *Afriscopes*:

It might be too harsh to consider the level of Jewish involvement in the exploitation of African resources a conspiracy of deliberate neocolonial policy so far, but the fact remains that Jewish money, Israeli political policy, and Jewish economic underpinning have combined to be an effective body of support for the expansion of the exploitative aspects of foreign investment in Africa rather than the cooperative and developmental aspect.<sup>16</sup>

Some military and intelligence links were also maintained after 1973. The most notable of these were with Kenya and Ethiopia. The Yom Kippur War and the severing of diplomatic ties saw the collapse of Israel's Ethiopian policy and the end to Israel's extensive military presence in the country. In early 1975, however, when the conflict in Eritrea escalated into open warfare, the ruling Derg, which had captured power in the previous year, followed in Haile Selassie's footsteps and turned to Israel for assistance. Though there was no discussion concerning the resumption of diplomatic ties, Israel responded positively to the Derg's request for arms and training. Israel immediately sent a group of officers to retrain units of the Ethiopian army. In particular, Israel was made responsible for the training of a 400 strong elite unit which later served as Mengistu special guard and the 5th Division, the Flame Division, which was heavily involved in the fighting in Eritrea during the summer of 1976. Moreover, Israel sent pilots to Ethiopia to help in the airlift of supplies to Ethiopian forces fighting in the Eritrea region.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Israel became involved in supplying arms for the Ethiopian army. It began to send small arms, ammunition and a variety of Soviet weapons captured in the Yom Kippur War including T.54 and T.55 tanks. After the United States stopped supplying arms to Ethiopia in April 1977 on account of the human rights violations committed by the Derg, Israel included in its arms deliveries essential spare parts for the F.5 fighter planes.<sup>18</sup> Israel's military involvement with Ethiopia, and its remarkable informal alliance with the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya and South Yemen in the Horn of Africa lasted until the beginning of 1978. The existence of these secret ties was acknowledged in February by Israel's foreign minister Moshe Dayan in a response to a question by journalists on Swiss television. At first, the Ethiopian government angrily denied that it had been receiving assistance from Israel. Later, it admitted that, as a result of the American arms embargo, it had been forced to purchase arms from Israel at 'exorbitant prices'.<sup>19</sup>

Links were maintained between Israeli and some African intelligence services. These ties became apparent in July 1976 with the

dramatic rescue of the hostages that were being held captive at Entebbe Airport in Uganda. Israel could not have carried out the rescue operation successfully without the cooperation it received from the Kenyan secret service, the General Service Unit. A series of meetings took place secretly between Israeli and Kenyan officials in the days following the hijack of the Air France plane. Though the Kenyans were not prepared to let Israel to use Kenya as launching point for the operation, agreement was reached which allowed the Israeli planes to refuel at Nairobi airport on the return journey from Entebbe. An Israeli Boeing 707, fitted out as a field hospital, was also waiting at Nairobi to attend to the wounded. Vice-President Daniel arap Moi immediately denied that Kenya had played any supporting role in the raid and condemned Israel for its act of aggression and for violating Kenyan airspace. The success of the operation would not, however, have been possible but for the logistical support supplied by Kenya before and during the operation.<sup>20</sup>

Although the extent of Israel's relations on the continent was greatly diminished after 1973, the absence of diplomatic recognition did not prevent a new network of profitable and mutually beneficial commercial ties from being slowly and quietly developed. At the multilateral level, however, the Africans were outspoken in their opposition to Israel and were unreservedly critical of its policies. The African leaders no longer displayed any support or understanding for Israel's cause.

The resolutions on the Middle East conflict adopted by the meetings of the OAU after 1973 expressed full support for the Arabs. At the 1974 OAU summit in Mogadishu, Somalia, the African states listed a number of conditions for the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. These were:

- i) The complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied territories to the lines of June 4 1967;
- ii) the liberation of the Arab city of Jerusalem;
- iii) the exercise by the Palestinian people of the right to self-determination and the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations relating to the Palestine question.<sup>21</sup>

Missing from this list was any guarantee of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Israel. Furthermore, the African states no longer included any direct reference to UN Resolution 242. The OAU also confirmed at that meeting, for the first time, its total support for the Palestine Liberation Organization

as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and called upon its members to aid the organization in 'its just national struggle'.<sup>22</sup> The tone of the resolutions adopted by the OAU became unreservedly hostile toward Israel. The African states denounced Zionism as a danger to world peace and condemned Israel for its policy of 'aggression, expansion and annexation of Arab territories by force'.<sup>23</sup> They also condemned Israel for '[its] continued refusal to abide by the resolutions of the UN and its deliberation, obstruction, by all means of manoeuvring, of every effort exerted to establish a just and permanent peace in the area' and for its 'persistent policy of repression ... against Arab inhabitants in the occupied Arab territories'.<sup>24</sup>

Israel's cause and its image in Africa was further undermined in 1976 by the visit of the South African Prime Minister to Jerusalem in April, and by its operation to rescue the hostages held at Entebbe airport at the beginning of July. While many African leaders might privately have been delighted by the swift release of the hostages and by Amin's humiliation, in public they expressed their outrage at Israel's action. Immediately the 1976 OAU Heads of State summit in Mauritius, which was in session at the time of the rescue operation, sent a message of sympathy and support to President Amin and passed a resolution condemning Israel for its aggression against Uganda.<sup>25</sup> In their pronouncements on the raid, African leaders focussed on the illegality of the operation and the attack on the sovereignty of a fellow African state. The raid confirmed for many, the view that Israel posed a threat to the security and territorial integrity of the African continent and that it believed in force rather than peaceful methods to settle disputes.<sup>26</sup> The Africans condemned the Israeli raid as not just an act of aggression against Uganda but also as a direct challenge and provocation against the entire continent. There was widespread indignation at the ease with which Israel had crossed into Africa and anger at the way the operation had exposed Africa's military impotence and its vulnerability to attack. Above all, there was deep resentment for the embarrassment and humiliation which many Africans felt Israel had inflicted upon them.<sup>27</sup>

The break in relations did not result in the complete endorsement by the African states of all the Arab positions toward the Middle East conflict. Differences in the approach and the attitude of the Arabs and the Africans toward Israel and the conflict continued to be displayed. In May 1974, President Tolbert of Liberia sent a warm message to Yitzhak Rabin, the new Israeli Prime Minister, praising Israel on the

signing of the disengagement accords with Egypt and Syria and told Rabin that he hoped that these accords would lead to a lasting peace in the region.<sup>28</sup> At the UN General Assembly in October 1974 the Nigerian foreign minister, Okoi Arikpo, declared 'there should be no illusions about any solution that does not take into account, the recognition that Israel is a reality, a nation which can make its own contributions to world peace.'<sup>29</sup> The foreign minister of Sierra Leone informed the Assembly that his government believed that peace would only be achieved when the right of the State of Israel to exist was recognized by the Arabs.<sup>30</sup>

The break in relations with Israel was followed by the formal recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people by the OAU and its participation at OAU meetings as official observers. In spite of this and a call by the OAU to permit the PLO to open offices in Africa, many African leaders were reluctant to allow the PLO to establish a presence in their country. In September 1974 the Palestinians complained of the difficulties they were facing in this respect and in particular, the persistent refusal of Nigeria to allow them to establish an office in Lagos.<sup>31</sup>

Another surprising development was the attempt by President Senghor in the summer of 1974 to bring Israelis and Arabs together for talks aimed at solving the Middle East dispute. In April Senghor announced that he was trying to organize a major Arab-Israeli dialogue in Dakar in which intellectuals from both sides would participate.<sup>32</sup>

Differences between the Africans and the Arabs toward the Middle East conflict were accentuated during 1975; in July at the OAU summit, and in November at the United Nations. Controversy over the Middle East conflict dominated the proceedings of the OAU Council of Ministers meeting and at the Heads of State summit held in Kampala at the end of July. At the Council of Ministers meeting, the Arabs, led by Libya and the PLO, demanded that the OAU should call for the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations. This call for the expulsion of Israel was strongly opposed by the Black African states. After hours of heated debate the meeting decided to adopt a milder resolution which had been proposed by Egypt. Its wording called on the members of the OAU to work with other states to deprive Israel of its membership of the United Nations for as long as it refused to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and recognize the full national rights of the Palestinians to their homeland.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the meeting decided not to back the demand that the OAU should institute a complete boycott of Israel similar to the one imposed by

the Arab states. Nonetheless, even this toned-down version caused the delegates from Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Zaire to register reservations on the resolution.<sup>34</sup>

When the Council of Ministers resolution was presented to the Heads of State meeting for approval the call for Israel's suspension from the United Nations was dropped completely. After a stormy debate which lasted for eight hours, the meeting chose to adopt two separate resolutions on the Middle East. The first was an amended draft of the resolution submitted by the Council of Ministers. The operative paragraph dealing with the Israel's membership of the United Nations was watered down to read:

[The OAU] calls upon all OAU member-states to take the most appropriate measures to intensify pressures exercised against Israel at the UN and other Institutions, including the possibility of eventually depriving it of its status as [a] member of these Institutions.<sup>35</sup>

The second resolution, 'On the Question of Palestine' was more strongly worded. While it, too, did not include any explicit call for Israel's expulsion from the United Nations, the OAU denounced the continuation of Israel's membership as contradicting the principles and the Charter of the organization.<sup>36</sup>

But even this milder form of sanction was considered too harsh by some of the more moderate African states. During the debate President Mobutu of Zaire declared that he could not see how the OAU could expel Israel from the United Nations. The Ghanaian delegate suggested that the OAU should drop the whole question.<sup>37</sup> Though the two resolutions were adopted by acclamation, Zaire went on record as being opposed to both of them. Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone tabled reservations, while Ghana joined them in making reservations on the second resolution. One month later at the conference of Non-Aligned states in Lima, Peru, the African states repeated their opposition to the calls for the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations.

When President Amin of Uganda, in his capacity as the Chairman of the OAU, addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations at the beginning of October, he called for the expulsion of Israel from the organization and for the extinction of Israel as a state so that the territorial integrity of Palestine would be ensured.<sup>38</sup> Amin's speech was condemned throughout Africa. The *Daily Nation* of Kenya declared that, 'it must be made perfectly clear that when he [Amin]

speaks about the expulsion of Israel he does not represent African opinion'.<sup>39</sup> *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Senegal, regarded the Ugandan leader's remarks as the 'the most racist act ever seen at the United Nations'. In Nigeria the *Daily Star* asserted that they smacked of sadism whilst the *The Sketch* described them as ridiculous and pathetic.<sup>40</sup>

The following month, on 10 November 1975, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution which defined Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination. The text of this resolution had originally been introduced during the meeting of the UN's Third Committee in October. There it had been proposed by 26 states, among the sponsors were three Black African states, Dahomey, Guinea and Mali. During the deliberations of the Committee the delegate from Sierra Leone proposed that discussion of this resolution should be postponed until the following year. The attempt to delay the consideration of this issue was supported by nine other African states. The proposal was, however, defeated and the Committee adopted the resolution by a margin 70 votes to 29 with 27 abstentions.<sup>41</sup> When this draft resolution was presented to the General Assembly for debate, thirteen African states supported a Belgium motion that the debate on the matter should be adjourned. This proposal, like the one proposed by Sierra Leone in the Third Committee, was unsuccessful. At the end of a stormy debate the General Assembly voted by a clear margin to adopt the resolution.<sup>42</sup> Only five African states, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Malawi and Swaziland voted against the motion. The Arabs did not, however, receive overwhelming support from the African states for this attack on Zionism. Twelve African states were unwilling to completely back the Arabs on this issue and abstained in the vote. Only twenty Black African states, were actually prepared to approve this definition of Zionism and voted in favour of the resolution. (See Table 4.6)

Many of the African states refused to accept the argument of the Arabs that Zionism constituted a form of racism. They were angered by the hasty manner in which the resolution had been introduced and by the way in which the Arabs had sought to railroad it through the United Nations. Presenting the proposal that the Third Committee should postpone any discussion of the resolution for a year, Mr Kamarake of Sierra Leone declared that his country was not trying to protect either Israel or Zionism but that it needed more time to weigh the implications of the resolution.<sup>43</sup> Charles Maina, the Kenyan delegate, observed that that no adequate reasons had been given for

**TABLE 4.6: BLACK AFRICAN VOTING ON THE 'ZIONISM IS RACISM' RESOLUTION**

In favour	Opposed	Abstentions
Burundi	C.A.R.	Botswana
Cameroon	Ivory Coast	Gabon
Cape Verde	Liberia	Ghana
Chad	Malawi	Ethiopia
Congo	Swaziland	Kenya
Dahomey		Lesotho
Equatorial Guinea		Mauritius
Gambia		Sierra Leone
Guinea		Togo
Guinea-Bissau		Zaire
Mali		Zambia
Mozambique		
Niger		
Nigeria		
Rwanda		
Sao Tome		
Senegal		
Tanzania		
Uganda		

Source: *UN Chronicle*, December, 1975, pp.38-39

rushing this definition through the General Assembly and that members had not been given sufficient time to study the issue. Hence, he declared, Kenya had no option but to abstain from voting on 'this obviously over-simplified definition of Zionism'.<sup>44</sup>

Other African delegations resented the linking of the issue of Zionism to the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. Mrs Mutukwa of Zambia told the General Assembly that her delegation would abstain in the vote because, 'Zambia wanted the Decade to succeed and could not be a party to any action by the Assembly which could have the effect of defeating the very purpose of the Decade'.<sup>45</sup> David Wilson of Liberia found it regrettable that the Programme for the Decade had been completely overshadowed by the question of equating Zionism with racism. He expressed bitter disappointment that, 'in all those brilliant and eloquent statements not one word had been said about the Programme for the Decade designed to help our brothers and sisters, some of whom were languishing in the prisons in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa'.<sup>46</sup> Ghana and Ethiopia also explained that their decision to abstain in the vote was in order to avoid jeopardizing the success of the Decade. It is likely that the anti-Israel vote would have been smaller but for

the remarks made by Daniel Moynihan the American ambassador to the United Nations. In response to Amin's speech to the UN, Moynihan, known for his outspoken support for Israel, declared that it was no accident that 'this racist murderer' was also the President of the OAU.<sup>47</sup> The Africans were outraged at this slur, and were unwilling to listen to American appeals to vote against the resolution.

The realization that the excessive and often one-sided attacks against Israel were hampering the attempts to gain the support of Western countries for their campaign against apartheid led the Nigerian delegate to the UN Economic and Social Council conference in Abidjan in July 1976 to declare that Nigeria wanted to delete references to 'Zionism as a form of racism' from all international resolutions. He declared that such references tended to, 'destabilize the UN system and to immobilize our efforts'. Accordingly Nigeria supported by the Ivory Coast and other African states blocked the efforts by the Arabs to introduce any anti-Israeli resolutions at the conference.<sup>48</sup>

The break in relations was seen as a dramatic display of continental unity by the African states. The Africans and Arabs appeared to have reached total agreement over the question of Israel. The Africans were not, however, equally committed to the Arab cause. Many were disappointed at the loss of the Israeli aid programmes and questioned the effectiveness of breaking off ties. One Kenyan writer was sceptical of the effectiveness of this move. 'If Israel is an agent of the imperialists', he argued, 'would it not only be more honest to break relations with, and expel, the imperialists themselves'.<sup>49</sup> Tensions between the Arabs and the Africans began to surface almost immediately. The African states were angry at the lack of assistance offered by the Arabs to help them overcome the effects of the rise in the price of oil on their economies. The massive increase in oil prices placed the African economies under severe strain, and when the Arabs refused to consider a two-tier price system for Africa and sell oil directly to the African governments at a reduced price, frustration and anger was soon vented. The Africans found the Arabs willing to share enemies but not energy. The criticism of the Arabs was heated and evoked memories of the past slave trade by the Arabs. The *Zambian Daily Mail*, for example, wrote:

[the] refusal by Arab countries to sell oil to African states at a reduced price is a tacit example that the Arabs, our former slave masters, are not prepared to abandon the rider and horse partner-

ship. We have not forgotten that they used to abuse us like herds and sell us as slaves.<sup>50</sup>

Anger was also voiced during the meeting of the East African Legislative Assembly at the beginning of June 1974. Joseph Nyerere, brother of the Tanzanian President, suggested that since the Nile rose in East Africa they should make a deal with the Arabs and sell a gallon of water for a gallon of oil.<sup>51</sup>

Criticism of the Arabs was coupled with expressions of regret at the break in ties with Israel and calls for the resumption of diplomatic relations. Israel Herz, Vice-President of the Histadrut's international division, reported after his tour to several West African states that he had found widespread support for Israel. Throughout his trip the Africans did not conceal their disappointment at the break in relations and had expressed the hope that ties would be soon renewed.<sup>52</sup> In Kenya, calls were made in public for a resumption of ties with Israel. Martin Shikuku, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, declared that Kenya had lost out by breaking with Israel and had not received anything in return from the Arabs. Shikuku was supported by the Minister for Local Government, James Osogo, and several other members of the Kenyan parliament.<sup>53</sup> Several of the Kenyan newspapers also joined the campaign for the resumption of relations. The *East African Standard* declared that Israel had never displayed any enmity toward Africa and that its aid programmes had done much to help the development of the continent.<sup>54</sup> During a debate in the Zambian parliament, several speakers urged the government to bring back the Israelis to boost agricultural production. 'We want the Israelis back', one member proclaimed, 'ten of them did more for us than a thousand of the present advisers'.<sup>55</sup> In West Africa there were similar expressions of friendship toward Israel. The Nigerian journal *Afriscopes* published an article which claimed that the anger against the Arabs was such that African countries were repeatedly putting out feelers for the resumption of diplomatic ties with Israel.<sup>56</sup>

The severing of diplomatic ties was also criticized by some commentators for depriving the Africans of the opportunity to influence events and play any meaningful role in resolving the conflict in the Middle East.

It is regrettable that since the OAU has openly supported one of the parties to the conflict, the Organization has been unable to play any role in resolving the crisis. Admittedly the rupture of diplomatic relations between African states and Israel would cause the

latter some discomfort and boost Arab morale. It is, however, debatable if it would contribute anything towards resolving the conflict, and the South African question. Unlike the United States, which is Israel's principal backer, the economic and political impotence of the OAU has rendered the Organization ineffective in the present stalemate.<sup>57</sup>

At the bilateral level after the break, the African states were not prepared to take any further measures against Israel other than diplomatic disapproval. The Africans still retained a great deal of goodwill toward Israel. The absence of diplomatic recognition did not prevent a new set of profitable and mutually beneficial ties from being slowly and quietly developed. But the missing dimension of relations between Israel and Africa during this period was the lack any real contact at the political level. Meetings between Israeli and African officials were infrequent and of little consequence. In 1974 and 1975 Israel's foreign minister Yigal Allon met with several African foreign ministers at the United Nations. It was also reported that he met secretly with the Zairean foreign minister in Switzerland at the end of 1975.<sup>58</sup> It was not until the end of 1976 that the first public meeting between an Israeli and African leader took place. President Senghor, who had tried to organize a conference between Israelis and Arabs in Dakar two years previously, held talks with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, at the International Socialist Conference in Geneva. Two months later Rabin also met with the President of the Ivory Coast Houphouët-Boigny, in Geneva. In both of these meetings the African leaders stressed the importance of maintaining a dialogue with Israel. However, in spite of the speculation surrounding both of these meetings, the immediate restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel was not on the agenda.<sup>59</sup>

The disappointment of the Africans with the level of Arab aid and the occasional meeting between Israeli and African leaders led to numerous reports that the Africans were poised to restore their ties with Israel. However, no serious moves were made by either side in this direction. The bitterness in Israel at the way the African states had abandoned their cause was reflected in the lack of any systematic policy-making toward Africa in the Israeli foreign ministry in the immediate years following the Yom Kippur War. Israel made little attempt to exploit the stresses and tensions in Afro-Arab relations in order to regain its former position in Africa. Likewise, for the Africans the question of diplomatic relations with Israel ceased to be an important issue. The criticisms levelled at the Arabs were not linked

with the intention of restoring ties with Israel, but grew out of frustration with the Arabs and were aimed at encouraging them to increase the level of their support.

At the political level the relationship between Israel and Africa during this period can be best described as one of mutual neglect. Although a new network of relations had been developed discreetly, little effort had been extended, or interest shown, by either side for a political rapprochement. It was not until the sudden and dramatic visit by President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem in November 1977 that this situation was to change. Sadat's visit and the ensuing peace process between Israel and Egypt was to pave the way for a new era in the relations between Israel and Africa.

#### Notes

1. *West Africa*, 15 October, 1973, p. 1508.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 1508.
3. Quoted in Susan A. Gitelson, 'Israel's African Setback in Perspective' in Michael Curtis and Susan A. Gitelson, (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, (1976), p. 197.
4. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 198.
5. *Jerusalem Post*, 5 November, 1973. The break in relations is still referred to by many in Israel in terms of betrayal. See Mordechai Tamarkin, 'Israel and Africa-Past, present and prospect', *Africa Insight*, 15, 2, 1985, p. 8 and 'Back to Africa', *Newsview*, 1 June, 1982, pp. 12-13. This impression was also conveyed in discussions on Israeli African relations with numerous Israeli officials.
6. Sweden represented the interests of Israel in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia; Denmark in Zaire; Switzerland in Liberia; Finland in Nigeria; Belgium in the Central African Republic and Italy in Gabon.
7. *Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation in 1973*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel (Hebrew).
8. *Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation in 1974*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel (Hebrew).
9. *Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation in 1976*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel (Hebrew).
10. *Report of Activities, Centre for International Agricultural Cooperation 1976*, Ministry of Agriculture, Israel (Hebrew).



- \*11. For details see: *Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation in 1977*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel (Hebrew) and *Report of Activities, Centre for International Agricultural Cooperation July 1977*, Ministry of Agriculture, Israel (Hebrew).
12. *Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation in 1974*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel (Hebrew).
13. Moshe Alpan, 'Israeli Trade and Economic Relation with Africa' in Curtis and Gitelson, (eds.), *Israel in the Third World*, p. 107.
14. See Ethan A. Nadelmann, 'Israel and Black Africa: A Rapprochement?', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 19, 2, 1981, p. 215.
15. For a complete survey of Solel Boneh's activities in Africa see: *Solel Boneh International*, (Haifa, mimeo).
16. 'Israel and Africa: Jewish Economic Interests' *Afriscopes*, July, 1978 quoted in Naomi Chazan, 'Israel in Africa', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 18, Winter, 1981, p. 30-31.
17. *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew), 2 October, 1977.
18. *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), 7 February, 1978.
19. *Africa Research Bulletin*, February, 1978, pp. 4739-40. It is widely thought that Dayan's comments bought an abrupt end to Israel's military ties with Ethiopia and that Mengistu, highly embarrassed by the revelation, ordered the immediate expulsion of all the Israelis. In fact, as result of pressure exerted by the Soviet Union, Israel had been winding down its operations and the last Israeli advisers had left Ethiopia before Dayan's remarks in Switzerland. Interview: Hānan Aynor, who was the head of the Africa Department in the Israeli foreign ministry at the time, Jerusalem, August, 1989.
20. See 'Kenya-Israel: Secret Deal?', *Africa*, 60, August 1976, pp. 14-15. Details of cooperation with Kenya can also be found in Yehuda Ofer, *Operation Thunder: the Israelis' own story* (1976), pp. 138-40 and Richard Deacon, *The Israeli Secret Service* (1977), pp. 281-2. George Githii, the editor of the *Daily Nation* had been in Israel in the days before operation and returned to Kenya on the day of the raid. Within hours of the operation the *Sunday Nation* published details of the successful rescue of the hostages.
21. For text of the OAU Resolution see: *International Documents on Palestine 1974*, (1977), p. 303.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

23. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 76 (XII) Kampala, August, 1975.
24. *Ibid.* This condemnation can be found in all the OAU resolutions on the Middle East conflict in the years following the break in diplomatic relations.
25. See *OAU Document*, 'On Israeli Aggression against Uganda', AHG/Res. 83 (XIII), Port Louis, July, 1976.
26. From 1971 the OAU had declared that Israel presented a threat to security and territorial integrity of the African continent. See for example *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 71. (X), Addis Ababa, May, 1973.
27. See *Africa*, 60, August, 1976, pp. 14-15, For the reaction of the African press to the Entebbe raid see *Africa Research Bulletin*, July, 1976, p. 4105.
28. *Ma'ariv*, 24 July, 1974.
29. *United Nations Document*, GAOR A/PV. 2255, 3 October, 1974.
30. *United Nations Document*, GAOR A/PV. 2250, 1 October, 1974.
31. *Africa Contemporary Record 1974-75*, p. A110.
32. See *Africa Research Bulletin*, April, 1974, p. 3215; *Al Hamishmar* (Hebrew), 29 April, 1974.
33. *OAU Document*, CM/Res. 425 (XXV) Kampala, 25 July, 1975. The PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had been invited to attend the Kampala summit and was accorded the status of Head of State at the meeting.
34. *Africa Research Bulletin*, July, 1975, p. 3684.
35. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 76 (XII) Kampala, August, 1975.
36. *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 77 (XII), Kampala, August, 1975.
37. See *Jerusalem Post*, 3 August, 1985.
38. *Africa Research Bulletin*, October, 1975, p. 3811.
39. *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 2 October, 1975.
40. *Africa Research Bulletin*, October, 1975, p. 3811.
41. *United Nations*, GAOR A/C.3/SR 2134, 17 October, 1975
42. 72 states voted in favour of the resolution, 35 states against it and 32 abstained. For voting record on this resolution see *UN Chronicle*, December, 1975, pp. 38-39. For text of the resolution see p. 55.
43. *United Nations Document*, GAOR A/C.3/SR 2134, 17 October, 1975.
44. *UN Chronicle*, December, 1975, p. 41.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

47. See Samuel Decalo, 'Africa and the U.N. Anti-Zionism Resolution: roots and causes', *Culture et Developpment*, 8, 1, 1976, p. 113.
48. *Jerusalem Post*, 14 July, 1976.
49. *Sunday Nation* (Kenya), 28 October, 1973 quoted in Jake C. Miller, 'African-Israeli Relations: Impact on Continental Unity', *Middle East Journal*, 29, 4, 1975, p. 406.
50. Quoted in Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Terramedia: Themes in Afro-Arab Relations* (1982), pp. 129-30.
51. See Arye Oded, 'Afrika Bein Ha'aravim Le'bein Yisrael', *Hamizrach Hehadash* (Hebrew), 25, 3, 1975, p. 187.
52. See interview with Herz, *Al Hamishmar*, 5 March, 1975. Herz visited Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.
53. See *Africa Report*, 19, July-August, 1974, p. 26 and *Jerusalem Post*, 21 June, 1974.
54. Quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, 28 June, 1974.
55. These comments were covered by the *Times of Zambia* on 6 May 1976, see Moshe Decter 'To Serve, To teach, To Leave' (1977), p. 124.
56. *Afriscope*, September, 1974, pp. 23-25. See also *Newsweek*, 5 May 1975 for similar speculation.
57. Adeoye Akinsanya, 'OAU and the Recent Middle East War', *Afriscope*, January, 1974, p. 35. See also *West Africa*, 26 November, pp. 1681-82 and *Daily Times*, 5 October, 1977.
58. *Ma'ariv*, 23 December, 1975.
59. For discussion of Rabin's meeting with Senghor see *Ma'ariv*, 29 November, 1976. For details of meeting with Houphouet-Boigny see *Jerusalem Post*, 6 February, 1977.

## 5

## Africa and the Peace Process, 1978-81

On 9 November 1977 President Anwar Sadat stunned the Egyptian National Assembly by declaring that he was prepared to go anywhere in the search for peace and was even willing to speak directly to the Israelis in Jerusalem. Eleven days later, to the surprise of Israel and the shock of the Arab world, Sadat was addressing the Israeli Knesset. His diplomatic initiative was to alter radically the politics of the region and pave the way for peace between Israel and Egypt. The following year, in September, Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David Accords. These agreements set the stage for the signing of a full peace treaty on 29 March 1979. At the beginning of 1980, Israel and Egypt established diplomatic relations and ambassadors were exchanged.

The Camp David Accords and the peace treaty opened the way for a new phase of Israeli-African relations. Although the overwhelming majority of the African states had heeded the call in 1973 to break off diplomatic ties with Israel, by no means were all of them equally committed to the Arab cause. The promise of an era of partnership and cooperation between Africa and the Arab world had proven to be largely illusory. Many had regretted their action and were eager for the return of the Israeli experts and the technical assistance programmes. Foremost in the explanations of the African states at the time of the break had been the issue of solidarity with Egypt, a fellow African state whose territory was occupied by a foreign power. Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem and make peace with Israel effectively eliminated one of the prime factors behind Israel's political setback in Africa. With the signing of the peace treaty, voices were heard throughout the continent arguing that the diplomatic boycott of Israel was no longer justified. Speculation quickly followed that many African states were poised to reestablish diplomatic relations. Israel, for its part, was anxious to capitalize on the peace treaty and escape from its diplomatic isolation. In this revived quest for diplomatic partners the role of Africa, as had been the case in the 1960s, was perceived as central. In an ironic twist of events the road to Africa was now seen as leading via Cairo.

.Sadat's bold move in going to Jerusalem won him admiration throughout the world. He was hailed as a great statesman and, together with Menachem Begin, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. African leaders joined in this praise for Sadat. Zaire issued a statement applauding Sadat for his quest for peace. President Tolbert of Liberia sent a cable in which he described Sadat as a unique statesman, praised his courage and wished him success on his visit.<sup>1</sup> Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast also sent a message of support to Sadat and offered his services should they be needed.<sup>2</sup> Later, Houphouet-Boigny congratulated Sadat and Begin on being awarded the Nobel Peace prize. In the Kenyan parliament Wafule Wabuge, a member of the KANU party, paid tribute to President Sadat for initiating a dialogue with Israel. He was supported by the Kenyan Attorney-General, Charles Njonjo, who regarded direct talks between the two sides as the only practical way of resolving the conflict.<sup>3</sup> Nigeria's representative at the United Nations, Leslie Harriman, told the General Assembly that any step in the direction of peace should be supported. Press reactions throughout Africa expressed similar sentiments. *Le Soleil* of Senegal praised the visit as a 'big step forward'. *The Times* of Zambia, *Fraternite Matin* of the Ivory Coast and *The Standard* of Kenya all hailed Sadat's courage for making the visit.<sup>4</sup>

In similar fashion, the signing of the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty were received with enthusiasm throughout Africa. This positive response was reflected more in the African press than in any official statements of support.<sup>5</sup> In private, many African leaders supported the moves toward peace between Israel and Egypt. Several sent telegrams to the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin praising him for signing the Camp David Accords.<sup>6</sup> In public, however, they were reluctant to make any official comment so as to ensure that they did not become unnecessarily entangled in the dispute being waged between the Arab states over this issue. While many African leaders refrained from praising openly the signing of the agreements, there was little condemnation in Africa of either Egypt or of the peace treaty. The few states that did express opposition were either allied with the Soviet Union or were ruled by Marxist regimes such as Angola, Benin, Congo-Brazzaville and Ethiopia. The existence of strong support for Sadat's initiative was reflected in the success of the Egyptian delegations sent to various Black African states to gain their endorsement for it. Ambassador Ahmad Sidqi announced, on his return from a visit to West Africa at the end of 1978, that he had

obtained complete support for Sadat's peace efforts from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.<sup>7</sup>

The Sadat initiative and the peace process with Israel outraged the Arab world. They were bitterly opposed to every stage of the bilateral peace moves. Sadat was denounced as a traitor to the Arab cause and sanctions were imposed against Egypt. These included the withdrawal of all the Arab ambassadors from Cairo, the severing of political and diplomatic relations and the cutting off of economic aid to Egypt. Furthermore, Egypt's membership of the Arab League was suspended and its headquarters were moved from Cairo to Tunis. African conferences were one of the settings where the Arabs waged their crusade against Sadat. They wanted the OAU to condemn Sadat's peace initiative and bring pressure on Egypt in the same way they had previously used the organization to secure the diplomatic expulsion of Israel from the continent.

The OAU Council of Ministers, which met in Tripoli three months after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, was the first opportunity for the Arabs to raise this issue in an African forum. The meeting opened with a fierce attack on Egypt by the Libyans, which provoked a walkout by the Egyptian delegation. The resolution on the Middle East, which was adopted at the end of the meeting, did not include any outright condemnation of Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem. It did, however, contain a veiled attack against Egypt. While the Council of Ministers reaffirmed the previous resolutions on the Middle East, the meeting added a clause which expressed the total support of the OAU for the Arab Confrontation states.<sup>8</sup>

The support of the Africans for the radical Arab states, which were completely opposed to Sadat's initiative, was a setback for Egyptian diplomacy. At the next meeting of the Council of Ministers, held five months later in Khartoum, the expression of solidarity with the Confrontation states, and by implication opposition to Egypt's position, found no place in either of the resolutions on the Middle East. This omission undoubtedly reflected the strong influence at the meeting of Egypt and of Sudan, which had been supportive of Sadat in his discussions with Israel. The wording of the two resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian problem was consistent with the resolutions passed at previous OAU meetings. As such, the Africans were extremely critical of Israel and its continued occupation of Arab territories and reaffirmed their support for the PLO and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Neither of the resolutions, however, referred to Sadat's visit nor to the negotiations that were taking place between Israel and Egypt.<sup>9</sup>

With the signing of the peace treaty in March 1979, the Arab members of the OAU faced a double challenge. First, they attempted to isolate Egypt within the Organization and second, they sought to ensure that the African states maintained their diplomatic boycott of Israel. The first major test came at the meetings of the OAU Council of Ministers and Heads of State in Liberia at the beginning of July. Both Egypt and the Arab states were engaged in extensive diplomatic lobbying in the weeks before the summit. Egypt sent several delegations to African states to seek support for its position. In a speech to the Egyptian National Assembly, on 23 June, Sadat announced that he intended to go Monrovia and defend his initiative to the OAU Assembly. Shortly after this speech, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali, held a meeting with African ambassadors resident in Cairo in order to outline Egypt's position and to prepare the groundwork for the proceedings of the OAU meeting.<sup>10</sup>

Initially, Algeria, Libya and the PLO had intended to press for either the expulsion or suspension of Egypt from the OAU. The response to this proposal from the Africans was so negative, however, that the idea was dropped even before the meeting was convened in Monrovia.<sup>11</sup> Instead, the Arab Rejectionist states concentrated their efforts at Monrovia in trying to obtain a resolution that included an outright condemnation of the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty. For Egypt, its main objectives were twofold; first to prevent any condemnation the peace treaty and second to ensure that any potential call during the meeting for its expulsion from the OAU would be overwhelmingly defeated. The Middle East conflict dominated the proceedings of the Council of Ministers meeting in Monrovia at the beginning of July where the agenda for the forthcoming Heads of State summit was prepared. The Egyptian tactic at this meeting was to separate the specific issue of support for the Palestinian cause from the general question of the peace process in the Middle East. On the first question, the Egyptians gave their wholehearted backing to the demand for the creation of an independent Palestinian state and displayed a willingness to condemn Israeli policies toward the Palestinians living in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, they offered no objection to the resolution on the Palestinian problem, which was drafted by the Rejectionists and reflected the previous OAU resolutions on this issue.<sup>12</sup> In the discussions over on the situation in the Middle East, the Egyptians successfully prevented any explicit reference to the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty. The closest the resolution, which was subsequently adopted by the Heads of State

meeting, came to an outright condemnation of Egypt was the inclusion in the preamble of a section which was critical of any partial agreements and separate treaties.

[The OAU considers] that all partial agreements and separate treaties contravene the principles of the UN, the resolutions of the OAU as well as the people's right to self determination and serve only to worsen the state of belligerence prevailing in the region and undermine the rights of the Palestinian people and their cause which is at the core of the Middle East issue.<sup>13</sup>

The exclusion of any direct condemnation of the Accords or the peace treaty allowed Egypt to feel that it had secured a victory over the Rejectionist states. The Egyptians maintained that they too were opposed to partial agreements, and that their overall objective was aimed at securing a comprehensive settlement that involved all the parties to the conflict.

By the time Sadat arrived in Monrovia for the Heads of State summit the main arguments concerning the Egyptian position had already been resolved by the Council of Ministers meeting. The general position of the Black African states toward the peace process in the Middle East was reflected in the remarks of the Liberian President William Tolbert. In his opening address to the summit, Tolbert praised the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. 'Realizing the good intentions of the two sides', he declared, 'we can only appreciate the initiative for peace undertaken by Egypt and Israel'.<sup>14</sup>

When Sadat went to the rostrum to address the Assembly, eight delegations walked out of the hall in protest. In contrast, the remaining delegates gave Sadat a standing ovation. In a long and detailed speech Sadat defended his policies toward Israel. Speaking on behalf of 41 million Africans living in Egypt, he stressed that the peace treaty with Israel was only the first stage in the search for peace in the region. Sadat reassured the African delegates that Egypt was still fully committed to the cause of the Palestinians and that no solution to the Middle East conflict could be found if it did not address this issue.<sup>15</sup>

At the next Heads of State Summit, held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in June 1980, the Arab states launched another attempt to have the Accords and the peace treaty condemned. At the preliminary session of the Council of Ministers meeting, three draft resolutions relating on the Middle East were presented. The first was submitted

by Egypt and expressed full support for all attempts aimed at bringing peace to the region. The second draft was presented by Libya and supported by the Arab members of the OAU. This draft condemned the Camp David Accords and concluded that they had completely failed to resolve the conflict. The PLO delegation attempted to introduce an amendment to this draft which stated that Camp David Accords were null and void.<sup>16</sup> The final draft, and the one which was finally adopted, was proposed by Senegal, Zaire, Tanzania – the Africa group – was a compromise between the two other drafts.<sup>17</sup> The resolutions passed at Freetown meeting broadly repeated those adopted the year before in Monrovia. The OAU expressed its total objection to the negotiation of partial agreements but refrained from making any explicit mention of the Camp David Accords.<sup>18</sup> By the time the Nairobi Heads of State summit met in June 1981, the Arab Rejectionist states had abandoned completely their efforts to have Egypt expelled from the OAU. Once again, the Africans refused to directly condemn Egypt for its reconciliation with Israel.

The OAU was only one of the settings where the Arabs sought to isolate Egypt. They were, however, unable to rely on the support of the African states in this task. In his discussions with African leaders at Monrovia, Sadat received assurances that they would resist any attempt to suspend Egypt from any Third World forum.<sup>19</sup> Even before the Monrovia summit, seven African states, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta, had expressed their opposition to this form of sanction of disapproval by abstaining from the resolution passed by the foreign ministers of the Islamic Conference Organization to suspend Egypt indefinitely from the Organization.<sup>20</sup>

Another Third World setting where the Arabs tried to secure the expulsion of Egypt was the Non-Aligned Movement. Here the Black African states were instrumental in ensuring that they were not successful. The Arabs made their first challenge at the June 1979 Ministerial meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau in Colombo.<sup>21</sup> At the ambassadorial preparatory session, the PLO proposed that the suspension of Egypt should be placed on the agenda as a separate item. They failed to muster sufficient support for this proposal and managed to obtain only a single line in the ambassadors' report which noted that this matter had been raised at the meeting. Immediately after this meeting, twenty-seven African states issued a joint statement which declared that it would be in contravention of the principles of the OAU charter for them to support the suspension of Egypt.<sup>22</sup>

The dispute continued throughout the six days of the ambassadorial and ministerial meetings. In an attempt to arrive at an element of agreement, a seven-nation working group, comprising Cuba, Nigeria, the PLO, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tanzania and Yugoslavia, was set up and was instructed to arrive at a formula that would satisfy all the parties. The communique issued at the end of the Co-ordinating Bureau was a blow for Egypt. The meeting arrived at the conclusion that 'the Camp David Accords and the Peace Treaty of 26 March 1979 violated the decisions and Resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement'.<sup>23</sup> It appealed to members not to extend any recognition to either the Accords or the peace treaty. On the crucial question of the suspension of Egypt from the Non-Aligned Movement no progress was made. The meeting closed with the issue unresolved. The communique noted: 'The meeting had before it a proposal for the temporary suspension of Egypt ... During consultation the Bureau felt that it was beyond their competence to deal with this matter'.<sup>24</sup>

When the sixth Non-Aligned Summit met in Havana at the end of August, the Political Committee concentrated predominantly on discussing the situation in the Middle East. On what had originally been planned as the last day of the summit, the committee spent nine hours debating the Camp David Accords. Initially, it appeared that a sizeable majority were in favour of condemning Egypt and the Accords. But, a group of African states led by Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Zaire took the opposite view and objected to the attempt to censure a member of the movement for seeking peace. Accordingly, in the final Declaration prepared by the Committee there was no explicit condemnation of Egypt and the Camp David Accords. Most of the criticism in the Declaration was directed at Israel and the United States rather than Egypt.<sup>25</sup> The Declaration did, however, question the value and effectiveness of the negotiations between Israel and Egypt and of the agreements reached. It noted that since the signing of the Camp David Accords, Israel had intensified its policy of confiscating Palestinian land and had actually increased the number of its settlements in the occupied territories.

This dispute was then passed on to the Conference Bureau and finally debated by the full plenary session of the summit. In order to resolve this issue, the meeting had to be extended by an extra two days. The deadlock over the refusal to condemn Egypt and the demand for its suspension from the Movement was eventually broken by a compromise formula proposed by Presidents Kaunda of Zambia and Machel of Mozambique.<sup>26</sup> An additional three paragraphs were added to the Political Declaration. The outcome was a crushing and

humiliating defeat for Egypt. The Conference was unreservedly critical of the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty. It denounced these agreements as constituting:

[the] total abandonment of the cause of the Arab countries and an act of complicity with the continued occupation of the Arab territories and violate the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine.<sup>27</sup>

As a result, the meeting decided to place Egypt's membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which it had been an original founder, on probation for eighteen months. The Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement was entrusted with the task of examining 'the damage caused to the Arab countries, particularly the Palestinian Arab people by the conduct of the Egyptian Government'.<sup>28</sup> It was ordered to report on this matter to the New Delhi ministerial conference in February 1981 which would take a decision regarding the status of Egypt's membership in the Movement.

In his explanation of why he had supported the compromise formula, President Kaunda asserted that he hoped the threat of Egypt's suspension from the Non-Aligned Movement would put pressure on Israel to make necessary concessions in the negotiations over Palestinian autonomy. This reasoning amounted to the complete opposite of the intentions of the Arabs over the question of Egypt's continued membership in the Movement. Even then, seven African states, Cameroon, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, and the Upper Volta, expressed written or oral reservations over the condemnation of the peace treaty and the placing Egypt's membership on probation. Upper Volta expressed the feeling of many African states on this issue.

While recognizing that the Camp David Accords and the Israeli-Egyptian Treaty are not one hundred percent satisfactory, in the sense that they have not yet resolved the burning question of Palestine, which is at the very heart of the Middle East crisis, Upper Volta enters the greatest reservations on the categorical condemnation of these attempts at peace and refrains from all action seeking to suspend the Arab Republic of Egypt from the Non-Aligned Movement or from any other international forums.<sup>29</sup>

There was some uneasiness in many African states over Sadat's peace initiative. African states were generally split along ideological lines as to whether to oppose or support the dominant anti-Sadat

faction in the Arab world. Some African leaders were not fundamentally opposed to the peace process but were unhappy at the way Sadat had conducted the negotiations with Israel. Many were angered that Sadat had not consulted them before going to Jerusalem. There was also disappointment at his failure to link the issue of the Palestinians with the situation in Southern Africa as had been called for by OAU resolutions. In particular, they believed that Sadat ought to have asked Israel to scale down its economic and military links with South Africa.<sup>30</sup>

Most African states were not ready, however, to support the Arab Rejectionist states and condemn Egypt on this issue. They were reluctant to impose sanctions on a fellow African state. They saw it as being perfectly legitimate for Egypt to conclude an agreement to retrieve its territory. No Black African state broke off diplomatic relations nor did they substantially revise the nature and scope of their relations with Egypt. In fact, Egypt began to display a greater interest in African issues. After the signing of the peace treaty, the contraction of its Arab and Islamic roles led it to concentrate more on Africa to compensate for its losses on the Arab scene. The general refusal to accept the arguments of the Arab Rejectionists was well summed up by Peter Onu, the Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU. 'Most African countries were behind Egypt's move towards reconciliation with Israel', he suggested, 'because they all wanted peace in that area'.<sup>31</sup>

The moves toward peace in the Middle East and the support for Egypt in Africa also led to a notable development in the scope and nature of the exchanges between Israel and Africa. Although no state actually reestablished diplomatic relations, a movement in favour of more open ties with Israel became detectable in Africa. In particular, there was a rapid expansion in the volume of trade and commercial contacts, and an upswing in the number of technical assistance and cooperation programmes.

While the pattern of trade was unaffected by the break in diplomatic relations, exports to Africa began to flourish following the rapprochement between Israel and Egypt. In 1980 and 1981, Israel's exports to Africa grew by approximately 60 per cent, the only region in the world where Israel's trade actually increased. By 1981 the volume of Israel's exports to Africa totaled \$124.0 million, nearly four times the level at the time of the break in relations. The most spectacular rise was with Nigeria, trade with which accounted for nearly half of Israel's total exports to Black Africa. Other key countries in the expansion of trading ties were Kenya, Tanzania, Liberia,



Ethiopia and the Ivory Coast. Trade was not, however, confined to these countries. By 1981 Israel was exporting to countries throughout the continent. Only a handful of countries did not maintain some form of commercial relationship with Israel.<sup>32</sup> (See Table 5.1)

**TABLE 5.1: ISRAEL'S EXPORTS TO AFRICA, 1977-1981**  
(US\$ million)

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Africa	81.0	109.9	123.6	190.9	226.6
South Africa	23.9	37.7	48.2	79.2	98.6
Black Africa	57.1	72.2	75.4	111.7	124.0
Ethiopia	9.9	7.6	9.3	11.2	3.2
Gabon	2.0	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8
Ghana	1.7	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.7
Ivory Coast	3.4	6.2	6.3	7.0	3.3
Kenya	6.6	7.8	10.4	15.2	10.1
Liberia	0.2	7.6	9.4	0.3	0.5
Nigeria	18.6	20.5	19.5	44.3	61.9
Tanzania	4.1	5.8	6.7	8.6	4.2
Other Countries	10.6	13.4	10.6	22.5	37.0

Source: Compiled from *Foreign Trade Statistics*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel

Trade was only one aspect of the growing economic partnership. Israeli companies, which had become heavily involved in infrastructure projects, building roads, housing and public works throughout the continent, expanded their operations in Africa. Such was the growth in this area that by 1982 the value of Israeli investment in Africa was believed to be worth over three billion dollars.<sup>33</sup> Even then, it is difficult to ascertain the full extent of this commercial involvement since many Israeli companies operated in Africa through an European-based subsidiary. The lion's share of these contractual activities was carried out by Solel Boneh, Israel's largest construction company, which won contracts to undertake a variety of construction projects in the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Kenya, Togo, and above all, in Nigeria. One of the most significant projects undertaken in this period was the construction by Solel Boneh of a cement factory in Togo capable of producing 1.25 million tons of klinker per year. This was one of the first joint regional projects in West Africa and was

financed by Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo.<sup>34</sup> Another major contract was signed in September 1981 between Solel Boneh and the State Government of Anambra in Nigeria. This was a \$190 million agreement for the construction of a number of projects including the building of three hotels, a flour mill, a cement factory, an aluminium factory and two water works.<sup>35</sup> By 1981, the turnover for Solel Boneh International amounted to \$480 million, 75 per cent of which was accounted for by work undertaken in Africa.<sup>36</sup>

Other Israeli companies also expanded operations in Africa. Naf-tali Blumenthal, the chairman of the giant industrial conglomerate Koor Industries, spoke of the great potential of the African market for Israeli companies.<sup>37</sup> Some model agricultural farms, most notably President Mobutu's estate at N'seli and Houphouet-Boigny's presidential farm near Yamassoutro were constructed and run by Israeli experts.<sup>38</sup> In 1980 and 1981, Africa became a major source of demand for Israeli engineers, construction workers and agricultural experts.<sup>39</sup> By 1982, there were over 4,000 Israelis working in Africa on a purely contractual basis.

Another area in which relations showed visible signs of improvement was in the sphere of technical assistance and cooperation extended by Israel to African countries. With the severing of relations, the number of experts sent to Africa had dwindled to a mere trickle. By 1978, there were only twenty Israeli experts working on technical assistance programmes in Africa, in sharp contrast to the hundreds sent annually prior to the break in relations. Correspondingly, the number of African students attending courses in Israel had also fallen. After the signing of the peace treaty, the number of experts sent to work in Africa began to increase slowly. (See Table 5.2) Agridev, the Israeli government agency responsible for all agri-

**TABLE 5.2: ISRAELI EXPERTS WORKING IN AFRICA, 1978-1981**

	Long-term	Short-term
1978	8	12
1979	9	10
1980	10	27
1981	10	24

Source: Figures supplied by the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel.

cultural and development programmes, sent one or two experts to work on short-term projects in Ghana, the Ivory, Liberia and Zaire.<sup>40</sup> Three Israeli youth workers were sent also to Kenya to work with the National Youth Service and a survey on citrus products was carried out for the Ugandan government in February 1980.<sup>41</sup> Israeli institutions also began to organize 'on-spot' training courses in African countries themselves. For example, in 1980 the Mt. Carmel Centre organized a management training course for senior officers of the Kenyan National Council of Social Services and the Afro-Asian Institute ran courses on labour relations in Zaire and the Upper Volta.<sup>42</sup>

The increase in the number of experts sent to work in Africa was moderate, especially when compared with the figures in the 1960s. The reasons for this were twofold. The vast cuts in the budget of the Mashav meant that few resources were available for new projects. In addition, most of the Mashav's budget was already committed to ongoing projects in Latin America and Asia. More importantly, Israel was not, at this stage, prepared to find the extra finance to run projects in countries that were not prepared to reestablish diplomatic relations. Israel was willing, however, to increase the budget for courses run by the various Israeli development institutions. This allowed more Africans to come and study in Israel. In the years after the peace treaty, there was a marked increase in the number of students from Africa participating in these courses. In 1981, there were nearly twice as many students from Africa than in 1979. (See Table 5.3)

As well as the increase in the overall number of students participating on these courses there was a notable return of students from francophone Africa. In 1980, in response to this development, a course

**TABLE 5.3: AFRICAN STUDENTS ATTENDING COURSES ORGANIZED BY ISRAEL, 1978-81**

	In Israel	In Africa
1978	129	52
1979	155	68
1980	255	55
1981	292	50

Source: Figures supplied by the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel.

on Rural Community Development was held in french at the Mt. Carmel Centre, with twenty-six students from the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Togo, Upper Volta and Zaire participating. Another development was the return of African students to participate in the course on Rural Development Planning at the Settlement Study Centre in Rehovot. As part of the seven-month long course, three months were spent undertaking fieldwork in a development region of one of the participating states. In 1979 and 1981 the fieldwork for the course was undertaken in the Winneba-Swedru region in Ghana and around Nairobi in Kenya.<sup>43</sup>

The peace process with Egypt led to a wave of speculation in Israel that several African states would soon restore relations. Israeli government offices, as well as various public and private enterprises with African interests, were alerted in anticipation of a new era of Israeli African relations. Discussions in Israel centred less on the possibility of a resumption of relations than on the form and direction future relations were likely to assume. The general expectation in Israel was that once a few African states had decided to reestablish diplomatic ties then the rest would quickly follow, mirroring the pattern in which relations were severed in 1973. This air of optimism was reflected in many articles in the Israeli press. The following is representative of this general expectation: 'It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that once a peace treaty is signed most of the thirty-three African countries with which Israel once had diplomatic relations would seek to reestablish them'.<sup>44</sup> The international media added to the mounting speculation that the African states were poised to end their diplomatic boycott of Israel. Predictions of the resumption of ties were to be found even in the Arab press. The Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Anba* reported in September 1978 that the Ivory Coast, Togo, Tanzania and Nigeria had officially informed Israel that they intended to reestablish diplomatic relations.<sup>45</sup>

In Africa, support for Egypt and the peace process was accompanied with calls for a restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel. The demand for a rapprochement was particularly strong in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia. Reports that Nigeria was about to take this step were so widespread after the return to civilian rule in October 1979 that President Shahu Shagari was compelled to deny them officially. In spite of this denial, prominent voices in Nigeria continued to be heard demanding the restoration of relations with Israel. In an interview with the *Sunday Times* the Nigerian foreign minister, Professor Ishayu Audu, indicated that such a step would be in Nigeria's interest.<sup>46</sup> In March 1980 the former Nigerian foreign

minister Jaja Wachuku, then the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on the government to start talks with Israel without any further delay.<sup>47</sup> Chief Michael Ajasin, the Governor of Ondo State, added his support for the reestablishment of ties.<sup>48</sup> The National President of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Michael Asaju, told Israel radio that there was a growing desire amongst Nigerians for the restoration of relations.<sup>49</sup> Favourable attitudes were also expressed in the Nigerian press. A survey carried out by *The Punch* found that 70 per cent of those polled favoured the resumption of ties with Israel.<sup>50</sup>

A similar debate was being conducted in Ghana. In December 1979, a resolution was passed at the annual conference of the Ghana Bar Association which called upon the government to restore relations with Israel. The following July a Ghana-Israel association was formed in order to help develop relations between the two countries. The creation of this group was welcomed by the *Believer* which stated that Ghana's break with Israel had done the country and its people no good whatsoever.<sup>51</sup> As in Nigeria, there were numerous articles in the Ghanaian press urging the government to renew its former ties with Israel. *The Pioneer* even carried an advert with the slogan 'Come Back Israel! Down With Arabs!!'<sup>52</sup>

The signing of the peace treaty in March 1979 led to the intensification of the speculation that a resumption of relations was imminent. On his return from a visit to Africa, the Deputy Director of the Histadrut's International Department, Israel Herz, spoke of the growing desire he had encountered amongst Africans for such action. In Zambia, Valentine Cafoya, a member of parliament, called for the immediate return of Israeli experts. In Nigeria, the former Commissioner for Health, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chief J.E. Adetoro declared that the reappraisal of Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Israel was long overdue. He added that it had never been in the interests of Nigeria to quarrel with Israel.<sup>53</sup> In Kenya, the issue was also raised by members of the Parliament. Speaking in June, the Chief Whip J.D. Kali proclaimed that since Kenya had only broken their ties out of support for Egypt, it should now renew its relations with Israel.<sup>54</sup> In New York, the Ivory Coast's ambassador to the United Nations, Amoakon Edgampan Tiemele, told a meeting of the World Jewish Congress that he hoped that the peace treaty would lead to the eventual restoration of diplomatic relations between African states and Israel.<sup>55</sup>

It was expected that the question of the reestablishment of relations with Israel would be raised at the OAU summit in Monrovia.

In May, Peter Onu, the Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU, confirmed that the summit would be considering this issue.<sup>56</sup> At a press conference held before the beginning of the Council of Ministers meeting, Samuel Dennis, Liberia's foreign minister declared that if Egypt exchanged ambassadors with Israel then the African states should take a similar course of action. At the meeting itself, there was a concerted, though ultimately unsuccessful, attempt by the Ivory Coast and Senegal to place a motion on the agenda that recommended the resumption of relations with Israel.<sup>57</sup> During the conference, Liberia's only Sunday newspaper, the *Express* urged African states to resume relations. 'With the rapprochement now a political fact of life between Israel and Egypt', it argued, 'member countries of the OAU need no longer feel bound to maintain a diplomatic boycott with a country that could offer [them] so much'.<sup>58</sup>

The question of the resumption of relations was a given an added impetus in September by Andrew Young, the former American ambassador to the United Nations. During his tour of the African continent, in which he visited Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Senegal, Young urged the African states to reassess their relations with Israel. At a press conference in Dakar at the end of his trip, Young announced that, of the states that he had visited, only Cameroon had completely ruled out the possibility of new contacts with Israel.<sup>59</sup> President Tolbert of Liberia, the Chairman of the OAU and known for his admiration of Israel, was especially responsive to Young's appeal and tried to assemble a group of states that would be willing to reestablish diplomatic relations.<sup>60</sup> Shortly after Young's trip Tolbert and Nyerere met with Moshe Dayan, Israel's foreign minister, at the United Nations in New York.

A sign of the marked improvement in relations between Israel and Africa can be seen by the developments at the United Nations. For the first time since the break, the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations was invited to receptions hosted by African countries.<sup>61</sup> When the Arab delegations sought to challenge Israel's credentials at the opening meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1980 they failed to win the backing of the Africa group. An African diplomat announced that the Africans had warned the Arabs that they were strongly opposed to any attempt to oust Israel from the organization.<sup>62</sup> A more surprising development occurred during the General Assembly debate itself. In his speech to the Assembly, the Liberian foreign minister G. Bacchus Mathews argued that the Africans should reconsider their policy toward the Middle East.

My government believes that the time has come for all states that have severed their links with Israel to begin a re-examination of their policy with a view towards the establishment of some link, however limited, that will facilitate communications. For us that re-examination seems all the more appropriate since our sister African state, Egypt, in whose support our diplomatic ties were severed, has now established formal ties with that country.<sup>63</sup>

In spite of these developments and the constant speculation, the hopes that the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt would lead to the immediate resumption of diplomatic relations by the African states remained unfulfilled. The basis to much of the speculation was more apparent than real. These expectations ignored a number of important developments which had occurred in the international politics of the Middle East and Africa since 1973. A reversal of one of the main factors that led to the break – peace between Israel and Egypt and a commitment by Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula – was not by itself a sufficient reason for the immediate restoration of diplomatic ties.

The most important change in this period was the development of relations between Africa and the Arab world.<sup>64</sup> The severing of ties with Israel had been heralded as the start of a new era in Afro-Arab relations. Immediately after the break, in November 1973, both the OAU and the Arab League passed resolutions calling for increased cooperation. The OAU Council of Ministers recommended the establishment of economic cooperation between the Arab League and the members of the OAU, and instructed the Administrative Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Arab League, to set up the machinery for such cooperation.<sup>65</sup> The sixth Arab Summit responded positively to the OAU initiative. It decided to strengthen the diplomatic representation of the Arab states in Africa and to expand economic, financial and cultural cooperation both at the bilateral level and at the level of Arab and African regional organizations.<sup>66</sup> Thereafter, Afro-Arab relations expanded in a variety of fields, with the creation of a number of joint institutions on the economic and diplomatic fronts.

The most spectacular manifestation of this new cooperation was the rapid growth in the level of Arab aid to the continent. According to figures provided by the Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA), between 1973-1980 the Arab states made a total of \$5,867 million in bilateral and multilateral aid commitments to the Black African states.<sup>67</sup> In order to channel this aid, the Arabs created a

number of multilateral aid institutions. They immediately established a Special Arab Fund for Africa (SAAFA) to help alleviate the effects of the sharp rise in the price of oil on the African economies. The most important multilateral Arab aid institution was BADEA. The decision to create BADEA was taken in November 1973, though the Bank did not begin to operate until November 1975. Following the incorporation of SAAFA in 1977, it became the main multilateral institution of the Arab developmental efforts in Africa. BADEA's main form of assistance to African states was the granting of loans on concessional terms to support the implementation of specific development projects. A large share of BADEA loans were jointly financed with other sources. It was also active in promoting private Arab investment in Africa. By the end of 1980, BADEA had signed 53 loans with 33 African states. Its commitments to African countries amounted to \$384 million, though it had only disbursed only \$165 million for loans, an amount equal to only 43 per cent of its commitments.<sup>68</sup> A number of national Arab aid agencies were also created to promote Afro-Arab relations. These included the Saudi Fund for Development and the Iraqi Fund for External Development, both established in 1974. Two other funds, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, which had previously focussed their operations exclusively in the Arab world, now expanded their assistance to include other developing countries and in particular the African states.<sup>69</sup>

The major landmark in the development of relations between the Africans and the Arabs was the convening of the First Afro-Arab Summit, held in Cairo, in March 1977. In the weeks before the summit, differences emerged between the Africans and the Arabs over the priorities of the meeting. The Africans wanted to bring about a change in the aid policy of the Arabs, while the Arabs wanted the emphasis to be placed on political issues. During the meeting, in response to the complaints of the Africans, the Arab states, notably Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, announced pledges of an increase in aid to Africa of \$1,454 million. At the conclusion of the summit, the 59 states (only Malawi did not attend) signed a Declaration and Programme of Action for Afro-Arab Cooperation. Known as the Cairo Declaration, it contained four separate documents which outlined, in a detailed and comprehensive way, the future development of economic and political cooperation between the Arabs and Africans.<sup>70</sup>

The Africans and the Arabs resolved to strengthen cooperation in trade, industry, mining, agriculture, energy, water resources, trans-

port, communications and financial cooperation. In the Political Declaration they asserted that the problems of Palestine and Southern Africa were Afro-Arab causes. The Declaration called upon all the states to increase their support to the groups that were struggling to recover their national rights. The African and Arab leaders agreed to intensify 'at the international level the political and economic isolation of Israel, South Africa and Rhodesia so long as the regimes of these countries persist in their racist, expansionist and aggressive policies'.<sup>71</sup> They also reaffirmed the necessity to maintain the economic and political boycott against those regimes. To ensure the implementation of the Cairo resolutions, the Summit established a number of permanent institutions. These bodies were the Standing Commission, comprised of twelve ministers from each of the Arab and African groups, the Coordinating Committee, and a number of working groups and specialized panels. Equally significant was the institutionalization of cooperation on a permanent basis through the agreement that the Summit should meet every three years, the Joint Committee of Ministers every eighteen months, and the Standing Commission twice a year.<sup>72</sup>

This new phase of solidarity and cooperation was not without its difficulties. Tensions and divisions still remained between the Arabs and Africans.<sup>73</sup> The African states were bitterly disappointed at the level of Arab aid. In particular there were angered by the refusal of the Arabs to consider a concessionary oil price and to sell oil directly to the African governments. They regarded the sums made available through SAAFA as totally insufficient, especially when compared to the increased burden placed on African economies as a result of the higher oil prices. By the end of 1978, the total disbursements of SAAFU amounted to only \$222 million. The two countries which received the largest amount of assistance, Tanzania and Ethiopia, each with \$14.2 million, found that this covered only 4 per cent and 8 per cent respectively of their oil bill over the 1974-76 period.<sup>74</sup> A typical African reaction to the oil-price rise was expressed by Mozambique's finance minister, Rui Baltazar: 'Each time the petroleum exporters meet, we are shaken by a brutal price increase. Our exports do not keep up with this sinister dance of numbers'.<sup>75</sup>

Another issue which angered the African states was the inequality in the regional distribution of Arab aid. Of all the funds committed by the Arabs to the whole African continent, 90 per cent was earmarked for the Arab members of the OAU. Their share, between 1973-1977, in the actual disbursements of this aid, reached as much as 93 per cent. In Black Africa itself, most of the Arab aid was directed to

those countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Eight countries - Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Uganda and Upper Volta - received more than 60 per cent of the funds provided by the Arab countries on a bilateral basis.<sup>76</sup> Multilateral aid distributed through BADEA also favoured these countries. In its first five years, 44 per cent of BADEA's total commitments were made to Black African states which were members of the Islamic Conference Organization.

Above all, the Arabs made the distribution of aid to Africa dependant on political support, especially in regard to issue of Israel. This was clearly expressed by a Libyan government spokesman:

Arab relations with the states of the world depend on the extent of the support these States give to Arab national issues in particular, and international libertarian and humanitarian issues in general ... Proceeding from this premise our political relations in the world depend mainly on the world's attitude towards the primary Arab issue [the conflict with Israel] and other national issues.<sup>77</sup>

In 1974 the disbursement of a \$3.75 million grant to Malawi by SAAFU was cancelled because of its diplomatic ties with Israel. Likewise, the President of BADEA, Dr Chedly Ayari, warned African states that if they maintained or established relations with Israel they could not expect to receive any loans from BADEA.<sup>78</sup> As part of the Arab response to the peace process all economic cooperation with Egypt had been suspended. In a note sent to the OAU, the Arab foreign ministers threatened that similar action would be taken against any African state that decided to restore relations with Israel.<sup>79</sup>

Differences between the Arabs and the Africans regarding Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the peace process between Israel and Egypt also led to the breakdown of cooperation at the multilateral level. The Arabs' demand that Egypt should be excluded from all Afro-Arab meetings was completely unacceptable to the African states, who insisted that inter-Arab disputes should be kept out of internal African affairs. Furthermore, they believed that Egypt, as a member of the OAU, was entitled to participate in all the proceedings on Afro-Arab cooperation. As a result, the Arabs refused to participate in any of the planned meetings; the scheduled joint ministerial and summit meetings were postponed indefinitely. The formal institutions established to develop Afro-Arab solidarity, the Standing Com-

mission, the Coordinating Bureau, and the various working groups, failed to meet because of Egypt's membership of those bodies.

Although the Africans had been extremely frustrated with the level of Arab aid, and disappointed with the lack of any meaningful assistance in coping with the increases in the price of oil, the fear of losing this aid was a clear restraint in deterring many states from pursuing ties with Israel. While the disbursement of funds to Africa did not match the commitments made, the Arab countries were nonetheless a highly significant source of assistance. In comparison Israel's aid programme had been modest.<sup>80</sup> The potential loss of any economic assistance from, and future cooperation with the Arab world meant that relations with Israel, at this point, were too costly to consider.

A second set of explanations relate to the fundamental shift in the attitudes of the Africans toward the Middle East conflict. Though solidarity with Egypt had been foremost in African explanations behind the severing of relations in 1973, the position of the majority of African states toward the Middle East conflict had evolved into one of support for the PLO and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

At the 1974 OAU Heads of State summit, the African states made the establishment of an independent Palestinian state one of the preconditions for the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. At the same meeting, the OAU confirmed, for the first time, its total support for the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and called upon its members to extend support to the PLO in its struggle against Israel. The PLO was also allowed to attend the meetings of the OAU as an official observer and, in 1975, Yasser Arafat was invited to address the summit at Kampala. It was during that meeting that the OAU adopted two separate resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict, one which dealt with the general situation in the Middle East, and the other which specifically addressed the Palestinian problem. In the resolution on Palestine, the OAU declared that the problem of Palestinians was the 'root cause of the struggle against the Zionist enemy', and that their struggle should, in the future, be regarded as an African cause.<sup>81</sup> The meeting also decided that the OAU Liberation Committee and the PLO should plan a joint strategy aimed at the liberation of Palestine. In addition to resolutions expressing support and the collective recognition of the organization, the PLO was allowed to establish either a diplomatic or an information office in fourteen in Black African states.<sup>82</sup>

Though the Black African states were unwilling to condemn Egypt for signing a peace agreement with Israel, the resolutions passed by the OAU, at Monrovia in 1979, and at Freetown in 1980, stated that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East could only be achieved through:

the exercise of the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, especially the right to return to their motherland and recover their national sovereignty, their self determination without any foreign interference whatsoever and through the establishment of an independent state in their own territory.<sup>83</sup>

The prevailing view throughout Africa was that, however important the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty were in meeting Egyptian national interests, they did not go far enough to satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinians.<sup>84</sup> Identification with the Palestinians and support for the creation of an independent Palestinian state had, since 1973, become overwhelmingly strong in Africa. This position was reflected by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere when he announced that he would not resume relations with Israel until the Palestinian people had regained their right to a homeland.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to their support of the establishment of a Palestinian state, the Africans had become increasingly outraged at Israel's policies toward the Arabs. A subject of specific concern was the question of Jerusalem. Israel's unification of the city, with the passage of the Jerusalem Law in 1980, was criticized throughout Africa as violating the religious sensitivities and rights of Muslims and Christians. Sierra Leone's President, Siaka Stevens, known in the past for his friendly attitude toward Israel, sent, in his capacity as the Chairman of the OAU, a strong protest to the UN Secretary-General in which he warned that 'this act by the Israeli authorities cannot but obstruct efforts being made to arrive at a just and lasting peace in the Middle East'.<sup>86</sup> At the OAU meeting in Freetown, the Africans condemned the passing of the Jerusalem Law in the strongest terms. They appealed to the international community not to afford any recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and stressed the need to 'liberate that city from Zionist colonialism and restore it to its former status'.<sup>87</sup>

Another issue of concern to the Africans was the development of Israel's relations with South Africa. Following the break in relations by the Africans, Israel began to expand its ties with South Africa. This new friendship was cemented by the visit of the South African



Prime Minister John Vorster to Israel in April 1976 and by the series of agreements signed by the two countries. The African states were outraged by Israel's invitation to Vorster and the warmth of his reception. Their anger toward Israel over this issue was reflected in their harsh statements and in the references to this relationship in the OAU resolutions on the Middle East. The open and demonstrative way in which these ties had been developed served to undermine Israel's image, and had done much to undermine the element of goodwill found for Israel in Africa. This issue, like that of the Palestinians, had now developed into a major constraint affecting the resumption of Israeli African ties. For example, in his denial that Nigeria was about to resume relations, President Shagari asserted that even if Nigeria was to overlook the situation in the Middle East, any form of reconciliation would be impossible so long as Israel continued to maintain good relations with South Africa.<sup>88</sup>

Another obstacle to the resumption of relations was, surprisingly, the negative attitude Egypt displayed toward this issue. Although Egypt had actively sought the support of the Africans for the peace process, at the same time, it asked those same states to refrain from pursuing relations with Israel until further progress had been made in the negotiations over Palestinian autonomy. On his tour of Africa to gain support for the exchange of ambassadors between Egypt and Israel, Butros Ghali, the Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, advised African states against renewing relations with Israel. When questioned by African journalists about this issue he replied, 'the withdrawal from the Sinai and the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is not enough by itself to alter the position of the OAU and the African states'.<sup>89</sup> Ghali did not explain how Egypt, as an African state, was entitled to act differently.

Though Israel hoped that the peace process with Egypt would lead to the end of its isolation and enable it to regain its former position in Africa, the foreign ministry was not sufficiently organized or prepared to exploit the opportunity that Sadat's initiative offered. In the years immediately after the break in relations, there had been very little systematic policy-making over the question of redeveloping relations in Africa. With the appointment, in June 1977, of Moshe Dayan as foreign minister, interest in relations with the Third World had abated even further. During his tenure as foreign minister, the budget for the Department for International Cooperation was severely reduced. As part of further budget cuts, Dayan even considered closing Israel's embassies in Malawi and Swaziland.<sup>90</sup>

In response to the positive reaction to the peace process and the calls in Africa for a reassessment of their policy toward Israel, a number of meetings took place between Israeli officials and African leaders. In May 1978, Shimon Peres, then leader of the opposition Labour Party, became the first Israeli politician to visit an African country, since the break, when he attended the International Socialist Conference in Dakar. During the conference Peres met with Senegal's President Leopold Senghor at his private residence and briefed him on developments in the talks with Egypt. At the beginning of 1979, Ehud Avriel Israel's first ambassador to Ghana, who had been so instrumental in developing relations in the 1960s, visited several African states and held a series of talks with Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast.<sup>91</sup> Dayan met with Nyerere and Tolbert at the United Nations and the director-general of the Israeli foreign ministry, Yosef Czechanower, held talks with Mobutu in Switzerland.

But the hopes in Israel that the peace with Egypt would lead to the immediate restoration of diplomatic relations by the African states remained totally unfulfilled. These expectations ignored the changes in the international politics of the continent and the constraints facing the African states. Aside from the occasional meeting, few resources and little effort was devoted to redeveloping relations with Africa. After Sadat's visit, Israel's foreign policy concentrated primarily on the negotiations with Egypt and on developing the peace process. Relations with Africa was not a priority for Israel. Furthermore, the predominant view in Jerusalem was that, since the African states had originally broken off relations, it was they, and not Israel, who should initiate the resumption of those ties.

The appointment of David Kimche as director-general of the foreign ministry at the beginning of 1981 led to a sudden and dramatic change in Israel's policy. The development of relations with Africa, once again, became an important foreign policy goal. Israel now launched a vigorous diplomatic campaign. The object was nothing less than the restoration of its one-time, prominent and successful diplomatic ties with Africa.

#### Notes

1. 'African Reactions to Sadat's Israeli Initiative', *New African*, January, 1978, p. 25.
2. *Ma'ariv* (Hebrew), 2 December, 1977.
3. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts* (BBC/SWB), ME/5675/B/2, 24 November, 1977.
4. 'African Reactions to Sadat's Israeli Initiative', p. 25.

5. For a general survey of the African media see: Susan A. Gitelson, 'African Press Reactions to the Camp David Summit and the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty', *Geneve-Afrique*, 17, 1, 1979, pp. 183-95.
6. *Ma'ariv*, 10 October, 1978.
7. *West Africa*, 8 January, 1979, p.70
8. See 'The Middle East and Africa' in *Middle East Contemporary Survey 1977-78* (1978), p. 71. This referred to the group of radical Arab states that were totally opposed to Sadat's recognition of Israel, and had assembled in Tripoli, at the beginning of December, 1977 to form the 'Front Of Steadfastness and Confrontation'.
9. *OAU Document*, 'On the Developments of the Middle East Problem' CM/Res. 631 (XXXI), Khartoum, July, 1978 and *OAU Document*, 'On the Palestine Issue', CM/Res. 632 (XXXI), Khartoum, July, 1978.
10. *International Herald Tribune*, 3 July, 1979.
11. *Ma'ariv*, 22 May, 1979. For the Nigerian point of view see, *Ma'ariv*, 3 June, 1979.
12. *OAU Document*, 'On the Palestine Question', CM/Res. 725 (XXXIII) Monrovia, July, 1979.
13. *OAU Document*, 'On the Middle East Question', CM/ Res.726 (XXXIII), Monrovia, July, 1979.
14. Quoted in *Ha'aretz*, 18 July, 1979.
15. For Sadat's speech see: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Middle East and Africa (FBIS/MEA), *Daily Report*, 19 July, 1979, pp. A7-15. The states that left the hall were Algeria, Benin, Djibouti, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.
16. FBIS/MEA *Daily Report*, 30 June, 1980, p. Q2.
17. *Ibid.*, p. Q1.
18. *OAU Document*, 'On the Middle East Question', CM/Res. 785 (XXXV), Freetown, March, 1980.
19. See *Middle East Contemporary Survey 1978-79*, p. 77.
20. See *Africa Contemporary Record 1979-80*, p. A112.
21. *Guardian*, 4 June, 1979.
22. Peter Willets, *The Non-Aligned in Havana* (1981), p. 24.
23. *Review of International Affairs*, 30, 702-3, July, 1979, p. 29, paragraph 61.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 29, paragraph 62.

25. For the Political Declaration see Willets *The Non-Aligned*, pp. 77-137. For the section relating to the situation in the Middle East see pp. 99-105, paragraphs 101-33.
26. *Guardian*, 10 August, 1979.
27. Willets, *The Non-Aligned*, pp. 101, paragraph 108.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 101, paragraph 109.
29. Quoted in Willets, *The Non-Aligned*, p. 246. For comments of other states see pp. 240-7.
30. T. A. Imobighe, 'Israel-Egyptian Treaty: The African Option', *Afrscope*, 9, 6, June 1979, pp. 10-12.
31. *Daily Graphic* (Ghana), 11 May, 1979.
32. These were Angola, Benin, Chad, Mali, Mozambique and Niger.
33. *African Business*, April, 1983, p. 16.
34. For a survey of Solel Boneh's activities in Africa see Solel Boneh (Haifa, Mimeo, 1982).
35. *Jerusalem Post*, 4 November, 1981.
36. *Jerusalem Post*, 20 March, 1982.
37. *Jerusalem Post*, 12 November, 1980.
38. For details of the farm at N'seli see 'Zaire, Facing the Future', *Israel Economist*, May, 1983, p. 55. For details of the farm at Yamassoutro see *Ma'ariv*, 21 February, 1982.
39. *Ma'ariv*, 21 April, 1981.
40. See: *Report on Activities of the Centre for International Agricultural Cooperation*, April 1978, Ministry of Agriculture, Israel (Hebrew).
41. See *Report of Activities of the Centre for International Agricultural Cooperation*, 1977-80, Ministry of Agriculture, Israel (Hebrew).
42. Information supplied by the Mt. Carmel Centre in Haifa and the Afro-Asian Institute in Tel-Aviv.
43. For further details of this course see: *Settlement Study Centre* (Rehovot, Mimeo).
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47. *Foreign Report* (London), 5 March, 1980.
48. *Daily Times* (Lagos), 21 February, 1980.
49. Quoted in *Africa Contemporary Record 1980-81*, (1981) p. A.113.
50. *The Punch*, 17 April 1980. For other calls for a renewal of ties with Israel see: *Daily Times* 14 October, 1978; *Daily Times* 20 September, 1979; *The Nigerian Chronicle*, 10 January 1980.

51. Quoted in *Africa Contemporary Record, 1980-81*, p. A.113.
52. *The Punch*, 5 February, 1980. For others calls see *Ghanaian Times*, 26 January 1980; *Daily Graphic*, 29 January, 1980; *The Echo* 3 February, 1980.
53. *International Herald Tribune*, 27 March, 1979.
54. *Daily Nation*, 12 July, 1979.
55. *Jerusalem Post*, 4 May, 1979.
56. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 11 June, 1979, p. A2.
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67. Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, *Annual Report*, 1982, p. 73.
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69. Two excellent sources for Arab aid to Africa are: Harmut Neitzel and Renate Notzel, *Africa and the Arab States: Documentation on the development of political and economic relations since 1973* (1979) and Robert A. Mertz and Pamela M. Mertz, *Arab Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa* (1983). The latter is particularly useful for its analysis of the flows of bilateral and multilateral financial assistance to Africa and for the 49 Tables contained at the end of the book. See also Arye Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict* (1987), pp. 55-79.
70. See *OAU Document*, AHG/OAU-LAS (I), AFRARB/Doc. 1-4. The four documents were: 'Declaration and Programme of Action on Afro-Arab Co-operation', AFRARB/Doc. 1; 'Declaration on Afro-Arab Economic and Financial Co-operation', AFRARB/Doc. 2; 'Organization and Method for the Realization of Afro-Arab Co-operation', AFRARB/Doc. 3; 'Political Declaration', AFRARB/Doc. 4.
71. 'Political Declaration', AFRARB/Doc. 4.
72. For reports on the proceedings of the Summit meeting and the reactions in Africa see: Neitzel and Notzel, *Africa and the Arab States*, pp. 181-251.
73. There have been numerous articles on the sources of conflict between the Arabs and the Africans. See Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict*, pp. 81-129; Adeoye Akinsanya, 'The Afro-Arab Alliance: Dream or Reality', *African Affairs*, 75, 301, 1976, pp. 511-29; Dunstan Wai, 'African-Arab Relations: Interdependence or Mismatched Optimism?', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21, 2, 1983, pp. 187-213; Sammy Kum Buo, 'The Illusion of Afro-Arab Solidarity', *Africa Report*, 20, September-October 1975, pp. 45-48.
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75. *The Guardian*, 22 December, 1980.
76. Neitzel and Notzel, p. 73.
77. Quoted in *Africa Contemporary Record 1975-76*, p. A76.
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79. See 'Sola Ojo, 'The Arab-Israeli Conflict and Afro-Arab Relations' in Timothy Shaw and 'Sola Ojo, (eds.) *Africa and the International System* (1982), p. 159.
80. For the decade 1961-1971, Israel had spent only \$60 million on bilateral assistance. See Shimeon Amir, *Israel's Development Cooperation with Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (1974), p. 94.

81. *OAU Document*, 'On the Question of Palestine', AHG/Res. 77 (XII), Kampala, July, 1975.
82. Nzongola-Ntalaja, 'Africa and the Question of Palestine', *The Search*, 5, 1, 1982, p. 11.
83. *OAU Document*, 'On the Palestine Question', CM/Res. 725 (XXXIII), Monrovia, July, 1979 and *OAU Document*, 'On the Palestine Question', CM/Res. 787 (XXXV), Freetown, March, 1980.
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86. *West Africa*, 18 August, 1980, p.1581.
87. *OAU Document*, 'On Jerusalem', CM/Res. 791 (XXXV), Freetown, March, 1980.
88. See *West Africa*, 21 January, 1981, p.127. Israel's relations with South Africa and the effect of this relationship on Israeli-African relations is covered in Chapter Seven.
89. Quoted in *Ma'ariv*, 20 November, 1979.
90. See *Koteret Rashit* (Hebrew), 3 August, 1983, p. 9.
91. *Ma'ariv*, 22 February, 1979.

## 6

## The Quest for Recognition: Israel and Africa, 1981-89

At the start of the 1980s, Israel's diplomatic representation in Black Africa was insignificant. Diplomatic relations existed with only three African countries, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland, while interest offices were maintained in the capitals of Ghana, Kenya and the Ivory Coast.<sup>1</sup> Despite the network of informal relations that had been developed since 1973, the open disappointment of the Africans with the level of Arab aid, and the calls for a reappraisal of their ties with Israel, no African state had been prepared to reestablish diplomatic relations. The anticipation that the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt would lead to the immediate resumption of relations between Israel and Africa had failed to materialize.

It was the appointment of David Kimche as the director-general of the Israeli foreign ministry at the beginning of 1981 that marked the turning point in Israel's search for diplomatic recognition in Africa. Kimche, who had previously worked for the Mossad in Africa, and was regarded as one of Israel's foremost experts on Third World affairs, convinced Yitzhak Shamir, who had replaced Moshe Dayan as foreign minister, of the importance for Israel to emerge from its diplomatic isolation in Africa. In parliamentary affairs, Shamir had been noted for his quiet and low-keyed manner. Under his tenure in the foreign ministry, however, Israel developed an aggressive and determined approach to its relations in Africa, in contrast to the previous reticent nature of its operations on the continent.

At this point, Israel launched a vigorous diplomatic campaign in Africa, which replaced its previous policy that it was the Africans, and not they, that should initiate the resumption of diplomatic ties. Relations with Africa, once again, found a prominent place on the foreign policy agenda of Israel. The main thrust of Israel's policy was to concentrate on the economically and politically stronger African states, and on those countries with which it had developed close informal ties since 1973. Other states, ruled by pro-western, conservative regimes, and known to be fearful of Libyan and Soviet intervention in Africa, were also singled out for special attention. It was decided, however, that all possibilities should be pursued and that every opportunity would be exploited to the fullest. The aim was to

develop a dialogue and a presence on the continent in as many countries as possible. Although the main objective was the restoration of diplomatic relations, contacts were to be established without the prerequisite of formal ties.

High-level meetings commenced almost immediately. One of Kimche's first acts in office was to visit to Africa. Shortly afterwards, Eliashiv Ben Horin, the assistant director-general of the foreign ministry, met with Houphouet-Boigny in Abidjan.<sup>2</sup> Wherever possible, Israeli diplomats were sent to states in Africa where they had once been posted in order to use their personal influence to reestablish contacts. Discussions also took place with African officials in Europe, and at the United Nations in New York. The primacy accorded to this political motive determined a willingness to use all means available, military as well as economic, to promote a diplomatic rapprochement. The importance attached to the military dimension in African politics, and its increasing role in the international politics of the continent, led to the establishment in Israel of a joint committee of the foreign and defence ministries in order to coordinate their activities in redeveloping relations in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Israel also decided to increase the scope of its aid programme in Africa. At the end of February 1981, Rahamin Timor, the head of the Mashav, made an extensive trip to twelve African states to assess the possibility of expanding the activities of the Mashav in Africa. On his return, Israel began negotiations with the Dutch government over the question of the joint financing of any future aid projects.<sup>4</sup> Efforts were also made to gain the support and assistance of the newly elected socialist government in France and from the Reagan administration in the United States.

The visits to Africa by Israeli officials were matched by an increase in the number of Africans arriving in Israel for talks. African trade union leaders and clergy had continued to visit Israel after 1973. Occasionally, they had been met by officials of the Israeli foreign ministry. Now, with the development of a dialogue over political issues, there was a marked difference in the rank and importance of these visitors. African businessmen and generals, sent by their governments, arrived in Jerusalem to hold discussions with Israeli officials. In February 1981, fifteen members of the Kenyan parliament had agreed to pay an official visit to Israel as guests of the Knesset. The premature announcement of the arrival of this group, however, led to subsequent cancellation of the proposed visit.<sup>5</sup>

The first sign of success for Israel came in June 1981 following the OAU Heads of State summit in Nairobi. David Dacko, who, on

regaining power in the Central African Republic had entered into discussions with Israel, met with a high ranking Israeli official while attending the summit. During this meeting, agreement was reached for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries and for the appointment of an Israeli ambassador in Bangui. Israel decided to send Ephraim Ben Haim, a diplomat who had served in the Central African Republic when Dacko had previously held power. An illness, however, delayed Ben Haim's departure for Bangui and postponed the announcement of the resumption of relations. In the meantime, Dacko was overthrown by General Kolingba and the agreement between the two countries was cancelled.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this setback, Israel's diplomatic efforts in Africa were intensified. In September, Shamir met with seven African foreign ministers at the United Nations. Amongst them was the Liberian foreign minister G. Bacchus Mathews, who, in his address to the General Assembly, praised the peace process in the Middle East and declared that the continued isolation of Israel served only to undermine the chances of peace in the region.<sup>7</sup> Another encouraging development for Israel was the passing in the legislature of the Oyo state in Nigeria of a motion, in October, which called upon the Federal Government to reestablish relations with Israel as a matter of urgency.<sup>8</sup>

In November 1981, Ariel Sharon, Israel's defence minister visited, in what was originally intended to have been a secret trip, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Zaire. Accompanying Sharon was Aryeh Genger, whom Sharon had appointed as his special assistant to coordinate and expand the level of Israel's military exports and training to countries in the Third World.<sup>9</sup> Although the military aspect of Israeli African relations had always been evident, and had continued even after the break in diplomatic relations, it acquired a prominent role after the appointment of Sharon as defence minister in the summer of 1981. Sharon viewed the sale of arms, and the offer of military training to African states, not only as a means of boosting Israel's military industries, but also as an important strategic tool. During his visit, Sharon signed a series of secret military protocols with the Central African Republic, Gabon and Zaire.<sup>10</sup> On his return to Israel, he announced that these agreements included some of the largest export contracts that Israel had received for many years.<sup>11</sup>

Israel's attempts to exploit the openings created by Sharon's visit were hampered by the adverse effect of the publicity which followed the visit, and by Sharon's call in New York for the sending of arms to

South Africa. Sharon at this stage had ostensibly taken the lead in promoting Israel's interests in Africa, and thereby pre-empted the centrality of the foreign ministry in this matter. Though officials in the foreign ministry had agreed to Sharon's visit to Africa, they felt that Shamir should have gone instead. They were also highly sceptical of Sharon's actual achievements, claiming that most of the ground work had been prepared beforehand by their own officials. Moreover, they were sharply critical of the publicity that Sharon had drawn to his visit and the damage that this had caused.<sup>12</sup>

Another major stumbling bloc was the critical reaction of the African states to the passing in the Knesset of the Golan Law, on 16 December 1981. This legislation extended Israeli law to include the Golan Heights, thereby effectively annexing the region. The African states immediately condemned Israel. Speaking on Nairobi radio, President Moi, who at the time was the Chairman of the OAU, declared that the move frustrated the search for a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict. He added that the Africans supported all the resolutions of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue.<sup>13</sup> The OAU called upon the international community to adopt a swift and unswerving attitude in order to cope with any possible repercussions of the move.<sup>14</sup> African leaders, who had been contemplating restoring relations, were quick to distance themselves from being publicly associated with Israel. General Kolingba cancelled his request for Israel to send a delegation of economic, industrial and agricultural experts to the Central African Republic.<sup>15</sup> Another serious setback occurred in Ghana, where negotiations with President Limann had reached an advanced stage. A motion calling for the renewal of relations with Israel was due to be presented to the Ghanaian parliament on 17 December. It was expected that this motion would have been passed by a clear majority, with most of the cabinet voting in favour of the move. The adverse publicity following the passing of the Golan Law, however, caused the debate on this issue to be postponed until January. In the meantime, the Limann government was overthrown by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who turned to Libya for economic assistance.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these setbacks, Israel managed to establish four new interest offices, in the Central African Republic, Gabon, Togo, Zaire. These were in addition to the interest offices which Israel had maintained in Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Kenya. At that time, however, these offices were staffed by low level officials and served only to facilitate commercial contacts between Israel and those countries. It was only with the decision to actively pursue the reestablish-

ment of relations with African states that the role of these interest offices was expanded. The interest officers were now instructed to perform, wherever possible, the functions of an ambassador, and try to develop political ties. For Israel, the opening of these interest offices was seen as a way of reestablishing a diplomatic foothold in Africa. They were not a target in themselves, but were regarded as an interim stage toward full recognition and were seen as an important means for developing contacts and of improving relations.<sup>17</sup>

Israel was also receiving considerable support from France in its efforts to regain diplomatic recognition in Africa. President Francois Mitterand, an old friend of Israel, was keen to help eliminate Israel's sense of isolation. At his first Franco-African Summit, held in November 1981, Mitterand encouraged the African states to resume relations. Visiting Israel at the beginning of December, his foreign minister, Claude Cheysson, assured Yitzhak Shamir that France would help Israel in Africa.<sup>18</sup> When Mitterand visited Israel in March 1982, he was accompanied by his personal adviser on African affairs, Guy Penne. Penne held a series of meetings with officials from the Africa department in the Israeli foreign ministry, during which plans for increased cooperation in Africa were discussed.<sup>19</sup>

In March and April, as Israel was completing the final stages of its withdrawal from the Sinai, a number of meetings took place between African leaders who were contemplating renewing ties with Israel. Many of these leaders were unwilling to be the first to take this step, and thus be singled out for criticism. The purpose of these discussions was to coordinate action over this issue, and restoring relations as a group, so that no one state would be adversely affected.

Finally, in May, Israel achieved its first success. On 14 May 1982, in a speech in Kinshasa to the ruling Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution (MPR), President Mobutu announced that he had decided to reestablish diplomatic relations with Israel. At the same time, Yoka Mangong, Zaire's foreign minister, informed the Arab diplomats resident in Kinshasa of this move. The following day, Mobutu sent his personal envoy, Nimyaidika Ngimbi, to Jerusalem to inform the Israeli government of his decision. After an absence of nearly nine years, Zaire became the first Black African state to restore relations with Israel.

In Israel, Mobutu's action was heralded as a major breakthrough in its efforts in Africa. Now that Zaire had taken the first step, there was anticipation in Jerusalem that other states would quickly follow. Both Shamir and Ngimbi predicted that several African states would soon join Zaire and renew ties with Israel.<sup>20</sup> One Israeli official went



as far as to claim that the momentum behind the resumption of relations would be unstoppable.<sup>21</sup> The Israeli interest officers in Gabon, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Kenya did not, however, report of any signs of such moves. Instead, African leaders were quick to deny any intention of following Zaire's lead. The optimism in Israel that other states would similarly decide to reestablish relations quietly disappeared.

Mobutu's decision to restore relations was not unexpected. At the beginning of December 1981, during a visit to Washington, he had told leaders of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League that once Israel had completed its withdrawal from the Sinai, the resumption of relations would not be a problem for Zaire. He added that since Zaire was not alone in Africa, there would have to be consultations with other African leaders over this issue.<sup>22</sup> Shortly after Sharon's visit to Zaire, Israel began to train Mobutu's special presidential guard, and in March an interest office was opened in Kinshasa in preparation for the establishment of full diplomatic ties.<sup>23</sup>

The timing of Zaire's announcement, however, took observers, in both Israel and Africa, by surprise. The common expectation had been for a joint announcement by a group of four or five states shortly after the OAU Heads of State summit which was due to meet, in Tripoli, at the beginning of August. Discussions toward such a move had been taking place in Africa during the previous months. Mobutu himself had stated that a joint approach was essential and had been working for the attainment of this position. By making his move unilaterally, Mobutu appeared to be stealing the march from other African countries. His move was described by one diplomat as 'Classic Mobutism'; rank opportunism blended with a never-ending illusion of Zaire's leadership of Africa.<sup>24</sup>

In his statement explaining the decision to restore ties, Mobutu cited Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai as the main reason:

The reasons for breaking ties with Israel are no longer valid since there is no more Jewish occupation of the African land of Egypt, which has recovered its land.<sup>25</sup>

Mobutu stated that in 1973, Zaire had been concerned solely with the occupation of Egyptian territory and that it had broken off relations as an expression of solidarity with a sister African country. In an interview with the Cairo newspaper *Al Ahram*, he argued that Zaire was not a partner to the dispute concerning Israel's presence in any Arab territory other than Egypt.<sup>26</sup> In an attempt to stave off criticism

from the Arab world, Mobutu coupled the announcement of resumption of ties with Israel by reaffirming his support for the rights of the Palestinians to national self-determination and the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.<sup>27</sup> Anxious not to alienate world opinion as well, Zaire opened its embassy in Tel Aviv rather than in Jerusalem.

Zaire also acted for reasons beyond this official explanation. Mobutu's decision needs to be placed in the context of Zaire's domestic and international concerns. By restoring relations, Mobutu hoped that Israel would help alleviate Zaire's severe financial difficulties and its pressing security needs. In particular, he was clearly expecting to benefit from the resumption of Israeli technical aid, and from an increase in the level of military assistance.

Mobutu saw Israel as an important channel of communication to the western world and in particular to the United States. Zaire's acute economic and defence concerns make the maintenance of the goodwill of its foreign backers and creditors the overriding goal of its foreign policy. Though the Reagan administration in the United States had displayed a considerable amount of sympathy to Zaire's needs, the appalling record of mismanagement and corruption of Mobutu's regime had been under attack in the US Congress. The requests by the Reagan administration for an increase in the level of American aid to Zaire were continually running into strong criticism on Capitol Hill. In May 1982, the level of economic aid to Zaire was reduced, by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, to a meagre four million dollars. Mobutu was anxious to find a new source of support and a powerful lever to exert pressure in Washington. He believed that by resuming of relations with Israel, he would succeed in reducing the level of criticism directed at his regime by his opponents in the United States. By enlisting Israel's support, and thereby the powerful Israeli lobby in Congress, Mobutu hoped to counter his critics. Mobutu, together with many other leaders in Africa, felt that it was necessary to secure Israeli assistance to improve his image in the United States, and to attract greater investment in Zaire. Indeed, Menachem Begin promised Mobutu that Israel would use its influence to promote Zaire's cause.<sup>28</sup> As one Israeli official confided, 'Mobutu believes that the Jews control the financial institutions, and therefore it is important to gain their support'.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted in this respect that Mobutu first publicly indicated his willingness to renew relations in December 1981, during his address to a meeting of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League in Washington. Mobutu's decision to resume relations must, in part, be

explained by his totally exaggerated assessment of Israel's ability to alter the attitudes in the United States government and its influence over the international financial institutions.

While Zaire was dependent upon the goodwill and support of foreign creditors to underwrite its faltering economy, Mobutu in the past had needed to call upon the direct military intervention of foreign powers to defend his regime. In the second Shaba invasion, in 1978, France played a decisive role in defeating the rebel forces. Mobutu was clearly worried by the election of Francois Mitterand as the President of France in May 1981. The French socialist party had been extremely critical of Giscard D'Estaing's close support of his regime. Indeed, during the presidential campaign, Mitterand had referred to Mobutu as a 'tyrant'.<sup>30</sup> Uncertain about the commitment of the French government to come to his defence, should the need arise, Mobutu was compelled to find alternative partners and additional ways of guaranteeing his security. He could not realistically expect help from the United States in the form of direct intervention.

It was in the background of this setting, that Mobutu turned to Israel to strengthen and improve the calibre of the Zairean army. Mobutu had always admired Israel's military ability. He had received his own military training from Israel, having undergone a paratroop training course in 1962. In addition, Israel appealed to Mobutu because it did not possess any major economic interests in Zaire, and therefore, he believed, would be less likely to become involved in any plots to overthrow his regime. When Ariel Sharon visited Kinshasa in November 1981, a secret military protocol was signed by the two countries in which Israel agreed to contribute toward the security needs of Zaire.<sup>31</sup> Shortly afterwards, Israel began to supply Zaire with arms and to train Mobutu's Presidential guard. Any further increase in the level of this military assistance was, however, dependent on the restoration of full diplomatic relations by Zaire.

Israel had hoped that the resumption of relations would be initiated by a state less isolated than Zaire and would have preferred that a group of states had acted together. Contacts with Zaire were, nonetheless, quickly expanded. Israel was eager to show that the resumption of relations would be advantageous for Zaire. Within a month, the new Israeli ambassador to Zaire, Michael Michael, presented his credentials to Mobutu in Kinshasa, and at the end of July, the Zairean ambassador arrived in Tel Aviv. Israel, and its supporters in Washington, immediately began lobbying on behalf of Zaire in an effort to prevent the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee from reducing the level of American military assistance to Zaire.<sup>32</sup>

Preparations were also undertaken for an official visit to Zaire, at the beginning of August, by Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin. This visit, however, was postponed, ostensibly because of Mobutu's need to recuperate from a recent illness. Mobutu's poor health was extremely fortuitous. Begin's presence in Kinshasa at that time would have been highly embarrassing for Zaire. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June and its siege of West Beirut had outraged international opinion. Furthermore, the OAU Heads of State summit was due to meet in Tripoli during the same week. Mobutu calculated that a visit by Begin would be counterproductive and unnecessarily provocative. After a further two postponements, it was decided that Yitzhak Shamir would go to Kinshasa instead of Begin at the end of November.

On 28 November 1982, Shamir embarked on a three-day visit to Zaire, a visit intended not only to expand relations with Zaire, but also to serve as a catalyst for further developments in Israel's relations on the continent. The success of the visit was vital for Israel. The African states would be watching closely to see whether the benefits from renewing relations would adequately offset the potential loss of any future aid from the Arab states. With the breakdown of the second OAU summit meeting in Tripoli, Israel hoped that more states would now be prepared to consider diplomatic ties. The importance attached to the visit can be assessed by the size of the Israeli delegation. Shamir was accompanied by a large entourage, which included agricultural and defence experts, representatives from the leading Israeli companies, as well as officials from several Israeli ministries. While Shamir toured the country and met with Mobutu and leading government officials, an Israel-Zaire commission held a series of discussions in which the details of the future cooperation between the two countries were finalized. In his talks with Mobutu, Shamir reaffirmed that Israel would endeavour to improve Zaire's image in the United States, and that it would make special efforts to encourage American Jewish investment in Zaire.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, however, Israeli officials tried to explain to their Zairean counterparts the limitations of Israel's influence in Washington and to correct their exaggerated assumptions of Israel's economic and political power.<sup>34</sup>

At the end of the visit, Israel and Zaire signed two agreements for economic and agricultural cooperation. Israel offered sixty scholarships to Zairean students to study agriculture in Israel and agreed to establish an agricultural demonstration centre in Zaire where Israeli experts would train local farmers. At the same time, Israel undertook

to organize on-site mobile courses in Zaire and send agricultural instructors to work in the rural regions of the country.<sup>35</sup> In order to finance these new projects, Israel had to allocate a special budget of half a million dollars for the Mashav and look for additional assistance from outside sources.<sup>36</sup>

Zairean officials were less successful, however, in persuading the Israeli treasury to underwrite any new investments made by Israeli companies in Zaire. Zaire's unstable economy made it a poor investment risk. Most of the Israeli businessmen were not prepared to sign new contracts unless they were assured of capital repatriation guarantees from the treasury in Jerusalem. This reluctance was expressed by one of the industrialists in the Israeli delegation. 'We have invested all over Africa', he pointed out,

and we did not need the resumption of diplomatic relations to invest in Zaire. If we have not invested in Zaire until now, it is because of the difficulties in Zaire itself. If the government has a political interest in strengthening the Israeli presence in Zaire then it must offer suitable guarantees.<sup>37</sup>

The Israeli government was willing, however, to support a feasibility study of a major irrigation project in the Bateke plateau region by Tahal and Agrinoor. In November 1982, three experts were sent to Zaire by Tahal, which had extensive contracts throughout Africa, to carry out a survey of an area of about 80,000 hectares in the Bateke plateau and assess the possibility of agricultural development in the region. The aim of the project was to ascertain whether the area could be irrigated and prove suitable for agricultural settlement. If conditions allowed, the intention of the project was to produce import-substituting crops to supply food for the Kinshasa region, and eventually, crops that could be exported to neighbouring countries.<sup>38</sup>

Many of the discussions held by Shamir also centred around military cooperation. During the visit, defense sources in Tel Aviv revealed that Israel would be presenting Zaire with an extensive programme for the reorganization of the Zairean army. This plan had been requested by Mobutu, following a secret visit by an Israeli military delegation to Zaire in October, and had been prepared by General Avraham Tamir, the Head of Strategic Planning in the defence ministry. Although Mobutu had been extremely satisfied with the military training already undertaken by Israel, he rejected the security agreements offered to him on the grounds that they were too ambitious.<sup>39</sup> Mobutu was also embarrassed by the revelation that

some of the arms that he would be receiving from Israel consisted of weapons captured from the PLO during the war in Lebanon. He announced immediately that he would never be willing to accept the offer of these weapons.<sup>40</sup>

Shamir's visit was quickly followed by an equally demonstrative one by Ariel Sharon in January 1983. Whereas Shamir's visit focussed on both the diplomatic and military nature of future ties, Sharon's concentrated solely on the military dimension of the developing relationship. During the visit, the details of the military cooperation between the two countries were finalized and a series of long-term agreements were signed. Under these pacts Israel agreed to a five-year plan in which it would undertake the reorganization and the training the Zairean army. In particular, Israel was given special responsibility for the training of the 12,000 strong Camaniola Brigade, whose main task was to defend the Shaba region, and the vital mining centre of Kolewezi, from further external attack. Israel would also equip this force with artillery and communication equipment. The agreement also provided for the expansion of the special presidential guard, which had already been receiving instruction from Israel during the previous year. Israel also undertook to establish a new artillery battalion and to train the Zairean navy. Within the framework of these agreements, Zaire agreed to buy military hardware from Israel. The source of the financing of these purchases by Zaire, and of the military aid package in general, was not disclosed, though it was announced that there would be a fifty-fifty division in the cost of the programme.<sup>41</sup> On his return to Israel, Sharon announced that Zaire had already purchased weapons costing \$16 million and was meeting its payment schedule.<sup>42</sup> He refused, however, to state how much it would cost Israel to deliver the assistance that Zaire had been promised, and to reveal the number of Israeli personnel that would be involved. An assurance was given that Israeli soldiers would not become involved in any fighting to defend Zaire.<sup>43</sup> In February, the defence minister of Zaire, Rear Admiral Laponda Wa Botende, visited Israel to iron out the final points to these agreements and to tour Israeli military and naval installations. Shortly before Laponda's arrival in Israel, the first delegation of Israeli officers left for Zaire to start the new military training programmes.<sup>44</sup>

Relations continued to flourish, boosted by the visit of Israel's President Chaim Herzog to Zaire, in January 1984, and the arrival of President Mobutu in Israel in May 1985. During Mobutu's visit, Israel and Zaire signed a number of new agreements for expanding

economic and technical cooperation. Again, military assistance dominated the discussions. Israel's defence minister, Yitzhak Rabin, assured Mobutu that, despite Israel's own economic difficulties, it would increase the level of its military aid to Zaire. An Israeli official revealed that for every dollar Zaire paid for its military imports, Israel would provide one dollar's worth of credit.<sup>45</sup> Israel also granted Zaire a \$8 million loan to buy equipment for Mobutu's special presidential guard and the Camaniola Brigade.<sup>46</sup>

Efforts to attract greater investment in Zaire were also successful. The Tamman Group, headed by the Jewish financier Leon Tamman, signed an agreement with the Zairean government at the beginning of 1985 to invest \$400 million in Zaire's transport and pharmaceutical sectors. In return the Group received a 40 per cent shareholding in Air Zaire, the Zairean maritime company and the Central Medical-Pharmaceutical Depot. Other projects included the setting up of a telecommunications and timber plants which would also be owned on a 40:60 basis with the Zairean government.<sup>47</sup> Israel also announced, after Mobutu's visit, that the finance ministry was now willing to subsidize insurance premiums for Israeli companies investing in Zaire.<sup>48</sup>

Mobutu's move led to speculation that other African states would soon end their diplomatic boycott of Israel. The Central African Republic, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Togo were all mentioned in the Israeli and international media as the principal states most likely to join Zaire.<sup>49</sup> This publicity embarrassed the leaders of these states. Denials were immediately issued of any intention to restore relations with Israel.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, those states which had been contemplating resuming relations with Israel were angered by Mobutu's lack of coordination with them. They had no desire to be seen as following Mobutu's lead and subsequently distanced themselves from Zaire.

An additional deterrent was the swift and harsh response of the Arabs to Zaire's rapprochement with Israel. Israel, backed by western interests, was accused by the Arabs of trying to undermine Afro-Arab unity by encouraging the Africans to reestablish diplomatic ties. Chedli Klibi, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, denounced Zaire's renewal of diplomatic relations as a serious breach of Afro-Arab solidarity, and a move which broke the spirit and principles of the Afro-Arab summit meeting of March 1977. Klibi warned that it would have negative consequences for Arab-Zairean relations.<sup>51</sup> The resumption of relations was seen as a great threat to the influence of the Arabs in Africa. Calls were heard throughout the Arab world for

a firm and decisive response, and, specifically, for the immediate implementation of an Arab economic and political boycott of Zaire. Indifference to Zaire's action and a failure to respond, it was argued, would allow Israel to further its economic and political influence in Africa, and encourage other states to take similar action.<sup>52</sup>

The response of the Arabs was swift and punitive. Saudi Arabia, one of the more important of the Arab states in disbursing aid to Africa, was the first to act. It was announced, on 18 May 1982, that it was breaking off diplomatic relations with Zaire. The statement issued by the Saudi foreign ministry declared that Saudi Arabia regretted that Zaire had decided to break the African boycott of Israel, and that it was basing its decision to sever ties on the fact that the Zairean action went against the will of the international community, the United Nations and other international bodies and organizations.<sup>53</sup> Saudi Arabia's lead was quickly followed by Qatar which severed relations two days later, and by Libya, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Algeria and Tunisia immediately recalled their ambassadors from Kinshasa for consultations.

The Arab states also launched a diplomatic offensive aimed at encouraging other African states to maintain their diplomatic boycott of Israel and not join Zaire. The Arab League, the Islamic Conference Organization, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq and the PLO, all sent envoys to Africa. Morocco and Iraq announced that they would try to persuade Mobutu directly to change his mind. In Saudi Arabia, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference Organization, Habib Chatti, met with the African ambassadors resident in Jeddah, and presented them with notes for their governments which stressed the legal and political consequences of Zaire's action. He also urged all the members of the organization to sever their ties with Zaire.<sup>54</sup> Chedli Klibi sent a message to the Secretary-General of the OAU, Edem Kodjo, demanding that the OAU express its position on Zaire's action. In the message, Klibi pointed out that Zaire's renewal of relations, as well as being in breach of the principles of the Afro-Arab summit, was also in violation of successive OAU resolutions on the Middle East and Palestine. The most tangible expression of Arab action against Zaire was the withdrawal of all Arab aid. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) immediately suspended all its operations. A statement issued by the Bank condemned the resumption of relations as a grave breach of Afro-Arab solidarity:

Zaire has disqualified itself from being a member of the Afro-Arab community. The Bank is no longer in a position to consider Zaire as a partner in the Arab-African cooperation plan.<sup>55</sup>

Chedli Ayari, the President of BADEA, warned the Africans that the Bank would take similar steps against any state that renewed relations with Israel.<sup>56</sup> The message to the Africans was clear and unambiguous, forcing many of them to reconsider the resumption of relations.

Israel's efforts to obtain recognition in Africa coincided with a particularly volatile and problematic period in the politics of Middle East. From an Israeli perspective the timing of Zaire's move proved to be unfortunate. On 4 June 1982 Israel invaded Southern Lebanon. What was originally intended to be a limited operation developed into a protracted conflict. The invasion provoked an outcry in the capitals of the world. The African states condemned the Israeli invasion and demanded that it immediately withdraw its troops from Lebanon.<sup>57</sup> The Lebanon war effectively suspended contacts between Israeli officials and African leaders and froze talks regarding the resumption of diplomatic ties. Opponents of Israel in Africa pointed to the invasion of Lebanon as proof of the aggressive nature of Israel, and to the folly of reestablishing relations. Even its friends hastened to distance themselves. Houphouët-Boigny, for example, made any further discussion on the resumption of ties dependant upon a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.<sup>58</sup> The invasion of Lebanon frustrated Israel's hopes of capitalizing on the breakthrough with Zaire. 'Whenever we seem to be on the point of success something seems to happen,' one Israeli official bemoaned. '[B]ut for the war in Lebanon several other African states would have renewed relations'.<sup>59</sup>

It was not until the end of the year that contacts were resumed. On his return from Kinshasa, Shamir secretly landed at Nairobi airport and held talks with the Kenyan President, Daniel arap Moi, who reportedly asked Israel for assistance in reorganizing his security forces.<sup>60</sup> At the GATT talks, held in Geneva at the end of November, several African delegations asked Israel for greater economic cooperation and talked openly of the possibility of closer political ties.<sup>61</sup> The agreements signed between Israel and Zaire created considerable interest in Africa. In Egypt, four African diplomats approached the Israeli ambassador, Moshe Sasson, and asked him to supply them with further details. During his visit to Kinshasa in January 1983, Sharon met with representatives of the Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya, and Tanzania. Shortly afterwards, Sha-

ron reportedly made a secret visit to Chad and Israel began to supply arms, via Zaire, to the government forces of Hissen Habre.<sup>62</sup>

At the beginning of 1983 the meetings between Israeli and African officials in Africa, Europe and the United States became more frequent. In March, the envoys of the Ivory Coast, Togo, Swaziland, and the highest ranking African official within the United Nations Secretariat, James Jonah of Sierra Leone, held discussions with leaders of the World Jewish Congress aimed at laying the foundations for a renewed era of normalization between Jews and Africans.<sup>63</sup> As negotiations concerning the further resumption of relations intensified, Israel looked to the United States for help in its efforts. The result was a joint committee, comprising officials from the Israeli foreign ministry and the State Department, designed to exchange information and develop a plan for joint activities and cooperation in Africa.<sup>64</sup>

Indicative of these developments was the request by Tanzania, whose President Julius Nyerere was a persistent and vocal critic of Israel, for the return of Israeli experts to work on rural development schemes. Given the political importance of Tanzania, and the lack of previous contacts, Israel was quick to respond.<sup>65</sup> Even more surprising was the invitation, in June, by Guinea's President, Sékou Touré, for an Israeli envoy to be sent to Conakry. The invitation by Sékou Touré, who, in the past, had been known for his radicalism and his staunchly pro-Arab stance, and was due to become the next Chairman of the OAU, reflected the widespread interest in Africa for renewing contacts with Israel.<sup>66</sup> Israel responded to this request by sending Shlomo Hillel, a prominent member of the Labour Party, who had formally been ambassador to Guinea.

In August, Israel achieved its second breakthrough when Liberia renewed diplomatic relations. Two months earlier, on 18 June, President Samuel Doe had announced that he was seeking a mandate from the People's Redemption Council (PRC) to start negotiations with Israel. Doe declared that while Liberia remained committed to the Arab cause, he believed that the return of all the Arab land occupied by Israel, and the Palestinian problem should be solved by negotiation.<sup>67</sup> In a related incident, Doe dismissed the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H. Boimah Fahnbulleh, citing differences in 'ideological philosophy'. Fahnbulleh, who was opposed to any contact with Israel, was replaced by the former General Secretary of the Mano River Union, T. Ernest Eastman, well known for his strong advocacy of relations with Israel.<sup>68</sup>

Liberia had made similar calls for African states to end their diplomatic boycott of Israel in 1980 and 1981. Both times, however,

these calls had resulted in an increase of aid and investment from Libya and Saudi Arabia, and the idea of pursuing contacts with Israel was dropped. Shortly after the first call in September 1980, Liberia and Libya signed an agreement for economic cooperation. This time, however, Israeli officials had already met with Doe several times before he made his speech. Now, instead of signalling to the Arabs that he was contemplating a dialogue with Israel, he was informing the other African states of his intention to enter into serious negotiations over the resumption of diplomatic ties. Benad Avital, who was the Israeli interest officer in Abidjan, flew to Monrovia to hold several meetings with Doe and other Liberian officials. As a result, a three-man delegation, headed by the Liberian defence minister, arrived in Israel on 7 August. This delegation met with Begin and Shamir and finalized the negotiations with Israel.<sup>69</sup> One week later, on 13 August, Liberia announced that it had decided to reestablish diplomatic relations. Within days of this announcement, Doe, accompanied by a large party which included his defence minister, foreign minister and four other ministers, arrived in Israel, becoming the first African leader in twelve years to make an official state visit.

Like Zaire, Liberia emphasized, in its official statement, that, with the evacuation of Egyptian territory, the reason for the absence of diplomatic ties was no longer relevant. Explaining Liberia's decision, its foreign minister, Eastman, said that it was motivated by

the strong belief that continued estrangement and isolation of Israel undermines the prospect for a peaceful solution of the Middle East problem. An objective review of the citation in the Middle East to-day indicates that the ostensible reason for the severance of diplomatic relations with Israel - solidarity with Egypt for occupation of its territory by Israel by force of arms - no longer exists since the territory of Egypt has been restored and Egypt has, in fact, resumed diplomatic relations with Israel.<sup>70</sup>

There were other reasons beyond this official explanation. An important factor was Liberia's fears of Libya's Colonel Qaddafi and Doe's desire to receive Israel's help to counter Libyan subversion. The main demand made by Liberia for restoring ties was the provision of Israeli information concerning Libya's activities in Africa. During the discussions with the Liberian defence minister at the beginning of August, Israel supplied Liberia with a breakdown of its intelligence assessments and revealed that it was aiding the Chad government in its struggle against the rebel forces of Oueddei Goukouni.<sup>71</sup> During

Doe's visit to Jerusalem, it became clear that Israel was exploiting the offer of assistance against Libyan expansion and subversion as a means of persuading African states to renew relations. Throughout the visit the question of cooperation against Libya figured prominently. The tone was set by President Herzog in his welcoming speech at Ben Gurion airport:

Much of the experience which we as a small country dedicated to achieving, maintaining and defending its independence, will, I assure you Mr President be placed at the disposal of your country. You come from Africa facing the new danger of Libyan colonialist ambitions, which threaten the independence of many African countries. Your struggle against this new found imperialism is a struggle with which we can identify and sympathize.<sup>72</sup>

Doe, in turn, echoed this point. He denounced Qaddafi as a man who wanted to lead the whole of Africa and condemned his continued intervention in African affairs. In an interview with the *Times*, Doe even accused Qaddafi of inspiring an assassination attempt against him in 1981, purportedly led by his former second-in-command Major Thomas Wey-Syen.<sup>73</sup> At the end of the visit, Israel agreed to supply Liberia with military equipment and advisers to help him counter the Libyan threat.

Like Mobutu, Doe thought that American goodwill could be attained by restoring relations with Israel. Though Liberia received its main assistance from the United States and was traditionally pro-western, the bloody coup led by Doe in 1980, and the human rights record of his regime, had caused much consternation in the United States. Doe also hoped to secure financial and economic assistance from the American Jewish community. While in Israel, he took the unusual step of addressing an assembly of the American United Jewish Appeal and invited them 'to come and join with us and participate fully in this historic period of transition'.<sup>74</sup>

Doe was also interested in receiving technical assistance from Israel. At the end of his visit, Israel and Liberia signed agreements for cooperation in a wide variety of fields. These included economic development, defence, national security, road construction, housing, agriculture, communications, shipping, air transport, marketing, manpower development and banking. Specifically, Israel promised to reactivate Agrimeco, an agricultural company which would be responsible for developing agriculture and would recruit experts for the evaluation of agricultural projects in Liberia. In addition, it agreed



to send medical experts to assess the possibility of opening a centre for the prevention of blindness, as well as an eye clinic in Monrovia. Israel also offered to help Liberia establish a national shipping line, and to participate in the management of Air Liberia and the maintenance of its facilities. Liberia was also promised that major Israeli construction companies would be encouraged to help it obtain international financing for road and other construction projects.<sup>75</sup>

A return visit by Israel's President Chaim Herzog in January 1984 resulted in the consolidation of this friendship, and the signing of further agreements. These provided for the establishment of the National Bank of Liberia, the development of Liberia's power system, and the setting up of a joint company which would clear forests and create rice fields.<sup>76</sup> In September 1984, a bilateral committee was formed to develop rice production in Liberia. Many Israeli companies, most notably Yona International, secured major contracts to undertake work in Liberia. In April 1984, Yona, through its subsidiary Hefziba, won a \$15 million contract to build the National Bank of Liberia. Later that year it was awarded a \$30 million contract by the Liberian government for the right to process and export timber.

Cooperation in the military sphere also figured in the relations between the two countries. In Israel, Doe toured military installations and showed considerable interest in Israeli weaponry.<sup>77</sup> Although Liberia officially denied that the cooperation agreements included military assistance, Doe announced, on his return to Monrovia, that Israel had agreed to help Liberia in the areas of national defence and security. Moshe Arens, Israel's defence minister, refused to discuss the exact nature of any future military aid, but indicated that Israel was prepared to send military advisers to Liberia.<sup>78</sup> The following year, in June, a large Liberian delegation, headed by the defence minister, Gray Allison, the Chief of Staff and senior army officers, arrived in Israel to seek an increase in the level of military cooperation. Allison thanked Israel for the assistance that Liberia had already received but noted that, with the increase in anti-government subversive activity, there was a pressing need for additional aid.<sup>79</sup> In addition, Liberian Union, an Israeli construction company based in Monrovia, was asked to build the new defence ministry complex in Fole-Congo town.

As with Zaire's renewal of relations the previous year, so Liberia's move led to speculation that other states would take similar action. There was wide anticipation that the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast and Togo would be the next states to resume ties. Indeed, Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema congratulated Doe on reestablishing

relations with Israel, adding that Liberia had set the pace for other West African states.<sup>80</sup> Extensive negotiations had also been conducted with the Central African Republic (CAR). In July, a delegation headed by the finance minister, Sylvain Banguin, arrived in Israel to discuss the assistance that they would receive from Israel in return for resuming relations. As with Liberia, the question of cooperation against Libya dominated the discussions. Israel agreed to send a team of experts to survey the possibilities for future aid projects. It was also agreed that, if diplomatic relations were restored, Israel would implement the military protocol which had been drawn up during Ariel Sharon's visit to Bangui in November 1981.<sup>81</sup> After hearing Israel's financial difficulties and the limitations of its potential aid, the delegation left Jerusalem extremely disappointed. During Doe's visit to Israel, there were reports that the Central African Republic had agreed to renew diplomatic relations. No official announcement, however, was made.<sup>82</sup> Speculation over this issue came to an abrupt end when its foreign minister, Salle Michel, announced, while visiting Saudi Arabia, that his country had no intention of resuming relations with Israel and reaffirmed the CAR's support for the Arab countries and the Palestinian cause.<sup>83</sup>

The Arabs condemned Liberia for its decision to restore ties and, again, responded swiftly to ensure that other states did not follow. Delegations from Arab capitals were immediately sent to Africa. The PLO appealed to the OAU to force Liberia to change its decision.<sup>84</sup> As with Zaire, the Arabs decided to impose diplomatic and economic sanctions against Liberia. They also threatened to ban all ships flying the Liberian flag from using the Arabian Gulf. The potential loss of the 'flag of convenience' arrangement for oil tankers would have meant a considerable loss of revenue for Liberia. In response to this pressure, Liberia decided to withdraw from its original intention to place its embassy in Jerusalem.

The hopes that other African states would renew relations failed to materialize. However, many countries showed less hesitation in sending delegations to Jerusalem to seek aid, or in receiving Israeli officials to discuss closer cooperation. One of these was Guinea. The negotiations started by Sékou Touré before his death in 1984 were continued by his successors. An Israeli delegation, led by Avi Primor, the head of the Africa department in the foreign ministry, visited Guinea in March 1984. This visit was followed two months later by a second delegation which met with Guinea's Prime Minister, Diarra Traore, and foreign minister, Facine Touré. Meetings were also held in Paris during the summer. Though diplomatic relations were not

renewed, Israel initiated a number of agricultural and economic projects in Guinea, and a small programme of military training.<sup>85</sup>

The rapprochement between Israel and Africa led to an intensification of the debate in Nigeria over this issue.<sup>86</sup> In May 1982, 106 legislators in the National Assembly tabled a draft motion which urged the government to restore diplomatic relations with Israel immediately and called upon President Shagari to encourage other African states to take similar action. This motion generated heated discussion and resulted in a counter-offensive, led by the director of the influential Nigerian Institute for International Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, to stem the growing pro-Israeli sentiment in the country.<sup>87</sup> Israel's invasion of Lebanon suspended the debate on this subject. However, during the presidential election campaign of 1983, the question of relations with Israel was raised by all three candidates. Obafemi Awolowo of the United Party of Nigeria, who had visited Israel in the previous year, and Nnamdi Azikiwi of the Nigerian People's Party announced that they would consider reestablishing diplomatic ties. Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria remained firmly opposed to the idea. The intervention of the military after the controversial reelection of Shagari froze the issue of relations with Israel. The preponderance of Northern and Muslim officers in the new military government and the appointment of Ibrahim Gambari, known for his critical attitude toward Israel, as foreign minister, meant that there would be no change in Nigeria's position.

Two unconnected incidents in the summer of 1984, drew attention to Israel's ties with Nigeria. The first of these was the involvement of three Israelis - Alexander Barak, Felix Abitol and Lev-Arie Shapiro - in the abortive attempt to kidnap the former Nigerian Minister of Trade, Umaru Dikko, from London. Dikko was wanted to stand trial in Nigeria on charges of extensive corruption during the Shagari government. Speculation immediately focussed on the extent to which the Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence Service, was involved in this operation. Barak, who had planned the kidnap, was in fact a former Mossad agent. The three Israelis, together with Mohammed Yusufu, an officer in the Nigerian Security Organization, were given long sentences by the British High Court. The Israeli government strenuously denied any official involvement with the kidnap plot, and no evidence was presented during the trial, or elsewhere, that the operation was carried out with its prior knowledge or consent.<sup>88</sup>

Shortly after the Dikko affair, two of Nigeria's most important traditional leaders, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, and the

Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade, arrived in Israel on a pilgrimage to the holy sites in Jerusalem. The Emir was a prominent Muslim figure in Nigeria. Their presence in Jerusalem, which received widespread coverage in the Israeli media, was regarded as a major breakthrough in Israel's efforts in Nigeria and Africa. Though their trip was a private one, they met with Israel's President, Prime Minister, and senior officials from the foreign ministry, and discussed the possibility of Israeli agricultural assistance in Nigeria.<sup>89</sup> News of the visit caused controversy at home and embarrassed the Nigerian government. The Emir and the Ooni were immediately suspended as chairmen of the traditional councils in their respective states for six months. They were also confined to their domains and had their passports withdrawn. Ibrahim Gambari, who was about to visit Saudi Arabia, condemned the two traditional leaders, and stated that they 'would not have been permitted to leave their domains if they had told their respective military governors that they were going to visit Israel'.<sup>90</sup> He added that such an unauthorized visit could not be interpreted as a sign of a rapprochement with Israel, and stressed that Nigeria had no intention of renewing diplomatic relations.

Israel had to wait another two and half years for its next diplomatic success. On 14 October 1985, at a major international press conference in Abidjan, it was widely expected that President Houphouët-Boigny would announce the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Ivory Coast and Israel. Instead he sidestepped this issue, stating obliquely that the Ivory Coast wanted to be friendly with all and enemies to none. He left little doubt, however, to where his sympathies lay. When pressed by Arab journalists to condemn Israel, he denounced the Arabs for their disunity and their attempt to manipulate Black Africa. 'Do you think', he asked rhetorically, 'that we are robots that will do everything that you tell us to do. I will not bow to any pressure ... we are a free and independent country.'<sup>91</sup> It came as no surprise, therefore, when one month later Houphouët-Boigny met with Israel's Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, in Geneva. After the meeting a joint communique was issued, announcing that the two leaders had agreed to recommend the resumption of diplomatic relations to their respective governments.<sup>92</sup>

Houphouët-Boigny's decision to reestablish full diplomatic relations with Jerusalem was not unexpected. The Ivory Coast had been one of the most reluctant states to break off relations in 1973 and had been the penultimate state to do so. Houphouët-Boigny was well-known for his support and admiration of Israel and had allowed Israel to maintain an interest office in Abidjan. Nor did the dialogue

between Houphouët-Boigny and Israeli leaders cease after the severance of formal ties. Contacts were maintained and in February 1977 Houphouët-Boigny met publicly with Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in Geneva. When Israel launched its diplomatic campaign in Africa at the start of the 1980s, it was widely assumed that the Ivory Coast would be the first state to restore ties. Numerous meetings had taken place between officials from Israel and the Ivory Coast, and in July 1983 Yitzhak Shamir had flown to Geneva to meet secretly with Houphouët-Boigny. According to several reports, Houphouët-Boigny assured Shamir that the Ivory Coast would renew relations with Israel in the near future.<sup>93</sup> Houphouët-Boigny's legendary caution, however, dissuaded him from acting alone and he had sought to organize a group of francophone African states to restore ties jointly. In the end his patience ran out and he made his move independently.

The renewal of relations with the Ivory Coast was seen as marking a new turning point in Israel's efforts on the continent. Unlike Mobutu and Doe, Houphouët-Boigny was a leader who commanded respect and influence in Africa. His reputation as the 'wise old man', the stability and liberalism of his regime, and the relative prosperity of the Ivory Coast was in stark contrast to Zaire and Liberia. Israel was clearly expecting other states to follow his lead. 'We have always known', Yitzhak Shamir asserted confidently, 'that if the President of [the] Ivory Coast, who is one of the most important statesmen in Africa, decided on such a move this would persuade other African leaders to follow suit ...'<sup>64</sup> Peres, on his return to Israel, declared optimistically that a further two states would soon restore relations, and that Houphouët-Boigny had promised him that he would encourage other states to end their diplomatic boycott.<sup>95</sup> Speculation immediately centred around the four francophone West African states, Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea and Togo, which had allowed Israel to open an interest office in their capitals.<sup>96</sup>

Again, the hopes of a mass resumption of relations remained unfulfilled. Israel had overestimated Houphouët-Boigny's importance and his influence on other African leaders over this issue. More importantly, it had yet to recognize that the process and the decision to reestablish relations was being governed by domestic needs and considerations and not by the actions of others. It did not have to wait long, however, for its next diplomatic success. On 26 August 1986, at the invitation of Cameroon's President, Paul Biya, Shimon Peres became the first Israeli Prime Minister in twenty years to make a state visit to an African country. Included, at the last minute, in his

large delegation was a team of medical experts and emergency relief supplies for the victims of the release of toxic gases from a volcanic lake in northwest Cameroon.<sup>97</sup> Biya's decision to invite Peres and restore diplomatic relations was a significant achievement for Israel. Unlike Zaire, Liberia and the Ivory Coast, Cameroon has a large and politically influential Muslim population. Not only was it a recipient of aid from the Islamic Development Bank but it was also a member of the Islamic Conference Organization. Furthermore, Arab aid commitments to Cameroon between 1974 and 1981 had totaled \$213.3 million in concessional and \$48.8 million in non-concessional loans.<sup>98</sup>

Explaining his decision to renew relations, Biya praised Israel's return of the Sinai to Egypt, adding that Cameroon's break with Israel and solidarity with the Arabs had intended to be limited in time. But above all, for Cameroon's leader, the resumption of ties, was dictated by mutual national interests.<sup>99</sup> Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in September foreign minister William Eteki justified his country's decision as an act of sovereignty within its choice of non-alignment and without hostility to anyone. The path to peace in the Middle East was through 'the recognition of Israel within internationally recognized borders and the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and a homeland.'<sup>100</sup>

Biya also had a personal interest in upgrading the level of relations between Cameroon and Israel. Informal contacts had existed since 1981. These intensified when Biya replaced Amhadou Ahidjo as President in 1982. It was after the two unsuccessful attempts to overthrow him in 1984, the first by Ahidjo and the other by Ahidjo's supporters in the presidential guard, that Biya looked to Israel for assistance. In July, Avi Primor met with Biya and Cameroonian officials and agreement was reached allowing Israel to open an interest office in Yaounde. Shortly afterwards Israeli army officers started to reorganize and equip Cameroon's security services and Biya's presidential guard.<sup>101</sup> When Peres landed at Yaounde airport he was greeted by a guard of honour which had been armed and trained by Israel.

Like Mobutu and Doe, Biya was also hoping that the restoration of diplomatic ties would lead to the expansion of economic activity, and to an increase in the level of investment from the United States. At the end of the visit Israel and Cameroon announced the setting up of a joint commission to promote cooperation in the fields of agriculture, trade, tourism, urban development and construction, communications, and defence and security.

Agreements were also signed whereby Cameroon would sell oil, coffee and cocoa directly to Israel. In return, Israel would supply Cameroon with communications and agricultural technology, and assistance in farm management and food production. Deputy agricultural minister, Avraham Katz-Oz, who accompanied Peres, specified that a team of agricultural experts would be sent to Cameroon to instruct in the use of this equipment and act as advisers to the Ministry of Agriculture. Cameroon would also be sending students to receive training in Israel.<sup>102</sup> There were also reports that Cameroon had ordered twelve Kfir fighter-planes and four Arava transport aircraft at an estimated cost of \$70 million.<sup>103</sup>

One year later Yitzhak Shamir, now Prime Minister, made a highly publicized trip to West Africa, visiting Togo, Cameroon, Liberia and the Ivory Coast. Shamir had been hoping to add Zaire to his itinerary. Mobutu's anger at Israel for its failure to prevent American Jews from publicly condemning his regime and disagreements over the purchase of weapons from Israel, led Zaire to inform Israel that Mobutu would be out of the country. The purpose of Shamir's visit was twofold: to mark the restoration of diplomatic relations by Togo and to give an added impetus to Israel's efforts in Africa. Togo's decision to reestablish relations had been made, in principle, in December 1986 when the commission of business affairs of the Togolese People's Assembly (RPT), had adopted a resolution to do so. The premature announcement by Israel of Togo's intention to restore ties resulted in the postponing of the final decision by the RPT's central committee for six months.<sup>104</sup>

Like the others before him, President Eyadema linked his country's step to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. At the same time he took care to distance himself from Israel by declaring his support for the rights of the Palestinians to an independent state, and for convening of an international conference, including the participation of the PLO, to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Eyadema's true reason for renewing relations became clearer at a press conference at the beginning of Shamir's visit. Israel, he announced, would advise Togo in counter-terrorism measures and would train units of its security forces, including the presidential guard. The previous September, Eyadema had been the target of an assassination attempt and abortive coup d'état. Shaken, he turned to Israel for help.<sup>105</sup>

Military cooperation figured prominently in Shamir's discussions in Liberia, with President Doe seeking an expansion in the level of Israel's training of his armed forces. Doe also repeated his request

that Israel use its influence in Washington to persuade the US Congress to increase the level of aid to Liberia. Shamir was sympathetic to this appeal. Describing the level of American aid to Africa as ridiculously low, he blamed senators and congressmen, 'some of whom are Jewish', for failing to understand the needs and predicaments of African leaders. Shamir also promised that Israel would train Liberian officials in public relations and on how to improve their country's image abroad.<sup>106</sup>

Throughout Shamir's trip rumours circulated that he would add a fifth country to his itinerary, the prime candidates being Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, where the restoration of ties would be announced. In fact, Shamir did visit a another country, landing secretly at Nairobi, on his way to Togo, to meet with Kenyan President Daniel Moi who reportedly assured him that Kenya would soon restore relations.<sup>107</sup> Israel, however, had to wait until the end of 1988 for Kenya to take this step. Visits by Reuven Merhav, the new director-general of the foreign ministry, and deputy foreign minister Benyamin Netanyahu helped consolidate ties and paved the way for a visit by Israel's foreign minister Moshe Arens at the end of August 1989, and the signing of a number of cooperation accords between the two countries.<sup>108</sup>

Moi's move came as no surprise, more puzzling was why he delayed his decision for so long. Of all the African states, Kenya had maintained the closest links with Israel. An Israeli diplomat who acted as Israel's permanent representative to the United Nations Environment Programme was stationed in Nairobi, and Kenya had allowed Israel to operate an interest section out of the Dutch embassy. From as early as 1974, calls were heard in the media, and even the Kenyan parliament, urging the government to resume relations with Israel. Commercial relations continued to flourish in the absence of formal ties, with over one thousand Israelis working in Kenya and trade amounting to over \$10 million per year. Links between the security services were also quietly maintained. These ties came to light when in 1976 Kenyan assistance, rendered discreetly, proved invaluable for the successful execution of the Entebbe hostage rescue operation.

Whereas other states had linked the resumption of relations with Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai and peace treaty with Egypt, Kenya cited the PLO's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the reason behind its decision to end its diplomatic boycott of Israel:

Now that the PLO has accepted the two crucial United Nations resolutions leading to Middle East peace through direct negotiations, the Government of Kenya has now reestablished diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.<sup>109</sup>

Moi's reasons to upgrade the level of relations with Jerusalem had little to do with the PLO's recognition of Israel. The move toward formal relations with Israel paralleled his difficulties in other areas. Kenya had, in recent years, been plagued with internal unrest, as well as border skirmishes with Uganda. Moi had blamed Libya, accusing Colonel Qaddafi of aiding dissident groups, and of trying to subvert the country. Shortly before Kenya's announcement of the resumption of ties a senior Kenyan defence official visited Israel and had met with officials, including Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir.<sup>110</sup> On the external front, Kenya's record on human rights violations had been coming under mounting criticism in the United States. During his visit to Washington in March 1987, Moi came under severe public criticism. Howard Wolpe, chairman of the House Subcommittee, warned that Kenya's abuse of human rights placed the aid it received from the United States under jeopardy. A report, *Kenya: Torture, Political Detentions and Unfair Trials*, produced by Amnesty International in July 1987 condemned the Kenyan authorities for trying to silence political opponents of President Moi by torture and detention without trial. Domestic instability, combined with the need to secure aid and investment from the United States led Moi to finally conclude that the benefits to be gained by upgrading relations with Israel, from the ongoing informal links already developed, would outweigh the potential costs.

Kenya's resumption of diplomatic relations led to predictions, as in the past, that other states would soon follow. Attention was focused on Nigeria which, reportedly, had assured Israel that it would take this step once Kenya renewed ties.<sup>111</sup> President Babangida, who had met with David Kimche in Europe, hinted, in an interview on Nigerian television, that the renewal of relations was only a matter of time: 'The circumstances which brought about the non-recognition are fast dying away and the situation may be different as time goes by.'<sup>112</sup> This speculation was fuelled by the meeting between Presidents Herzog and Babangida in Tokyo at the funeral of Emperor Hirohito and the call by the government owned Nigerian *Daily Times* urging the country to 'do away with the hypocrisy' and 'recognize Israel'.<sup>113</sup> As in the past, the reports and speculation were inaccurate.

Two weeks after Kenya, on 16 January 1989, following a meeting in Bangui between General Kolingba and Yossef Hadass, the assistant director-general for African affairs in the Israeli foreign ministry, the Central African Republic became the seventh state to renew relations. While Israel expressed satisfaction that another African country had decided to end its diplomatic boycott, the reactions in Jerusalem were relatively muted. It was not accompanied with the now customary predictions by Israeli officials of the imminent resumption of ties by several other states.

Likewise, Kolingba's visit to Jerusalem six months later received very little attention in the Israeli or international media. Kolingba had intended to visit Israel at the end of May. Sudan, however, refused to allow his plane to fly over its airspace and he was forced to return to Bangui. Refusing to be intimidated, Kolingba broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan and arrived in Israel six weeks later, immediately following the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution in Paris, for a five-day state visit during which agreements for cooperation in agriculture, irrigation, poultry breeding and community development were drawn up and signed.<sup>114</sup>

Israel's efforts to capitalize on the renewal of relations and persuade other states to follow suite were unsuccessful. Despite the optimism evinced by officials in Jerusalem at each occasion, the majority of African states decided to maintain their diplomatic boycott of Israel. However, Israel could take satisfaction that nearly all the African states had been receptive to its overtures and that it had succeeded in reestablishing contacts and in developing a dialogue over political issues throughout the continent. Moreover, most of the Africans did not condemn those states which had decided to upgrade the level of their relations. Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda announced, during a state visit to the Gulf states in May 1982, that he had no intention of restoring relations with Israel, but he adamantly refused to comment on Zaire's move.<sup>115</sup> Many leaders contended that each state was free to act as it chose and had the right to determine its own position over this issue. At OAU Heads of State summit meetings the Africans recommended that relations should not be renewed, but, at the same time were unwilling to denounce or take any measures against those states that had done so.

Typical of the African position was the response of the OAU Chairman, Sassou Nguesso of Congo, to the resumption of relations by Cameroon. While he did not believe that African states should renew relations until the Palestinian question was solved, he con-

• Table 6.1: Dates of Resumption of Diplomatic Relations.

State	Date
Zaire	14 May 1982
Liberia	13 August 1983
Ivory Coast	12 February 1986
Cameroon	26 August 1986
Togo	16 June 1987
Kenya	23 December 1988
Central African Republic	16 January 1989
Ethiopia	3 November 1989

tended that Cameroon was a sovereign state and was entitled to make its own decision regarding diplomatic ties with Israel.<sup>116</sup> The lack of hostility and the refusal to take action, despite the repeated demands of the Arabs, against those states which had renewed ties, indicated that relations with Israel were, once again, acceptable, and on the foreign policy agenda of the Africans.

A major obstacle to Israel's search for diplomatic partners in Africa was the reaction of the Arabs to those states which chose to restore ties. The Arab response was swift and punitive. The message to Africans was clear. If the role of Arab money and pressure in persuading the African states to break off relations with Israel in 1973 is still subject to dispute, its use in preventing the restoration of those ties has been pronounced and unambiguous. Although the Africans had been bitterly disappointed with the level of Arab aid and investment, the fear of losing that assistance clearly deterred many of them from pursuing ties with Israel. The dilemma facing the Africans is well reflected in the comments of the Ghanaian foreign minister, Dr Obed Asamoah. 'Although the Israelis possess the technological know-how from which we would benefit if we restored relations, it would not be enough to compensate the economic assistance that we would lose from the Arab world.'<sup>117</sup> Others maintained that it was not in Africa's interest to alienate the Arab world and that they should work to strengthen Afro-Arab unity. The Senegalese newspaper *Le Soleil* felt that the choice for Africa lay not in relations with Israel but rather in 'the revival of the sluggish Afro-Arab cooperation.'<sup>118</sup> 'Most African states must for reasons of economic survival cultivate the friendship of the Arab states', the Kenyan *Weekly Review* argued, 'Israel has little to offer in Africa's fight for economic survival'.<sup>119</sup>

While the pressures exerted by the Arab states were clearly evident, it is not sufficient to attribute Israel's lack of success in its

efforts solely to this factor. The majority of African states have insisted that the resumption of diplomatic ties with Israel required the complete resolution of the Middle East conflict and, in particular, a solution to the Palestinian problem.

The emphasis of the African concern with the conflict, which in 1973 had centred primarily on the question of solidarity with Egypt, has shifted to one of support for the Palestinians and their quest for statehood. This has led the Africans to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to the opening of PLO offices in many African capitals.<sup>120</sup> Thirty-four Black African states have formally recognized the Palestinian state proclaimed by the PLO in Algiers in November 1988.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, those states which renewed relations with Israel went out of their way to stress that the resumption of ties did not alter their support for the PLO, and for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Included in the list of African states which have recognized the 'State of Palestine' are the Central African Republic, Kenya, Togo and Zaire. The position of the Senegalese government is representative of the African states on this issue. In denying a report that Senegal was planning to restore relations with Israel, it stated that it would not do so, 'as long as Israel refuses to withdraw from occupied Arab territory, or to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people'.<sup>122</sup>

Of equal concern was Israel's relations with South Africa. The development of Israel's links with the apartheid regime had outraged the Africans. This relationship and its impact on Israel's quest for diplomatic recognition in Black Africa is the topic of the next chapter.

#### Notes

1. Mauritius had broken off diplomatic relations in 1976, shortly before hosting the OAU Heads of State summit meeting.
2. *Ma'ariv*, 5 March, 1981.
3. *Ma'ariv*, 9 December, 1981. For a discussion on the military influences on Africa's international relations see William J. Foltz and Henry S. Bienen, (eds.), *Arms and the African* (1985).
4. For details of Timor's visit see: *Report of Activities, Centre for International Cooperation, June 1981*, Ministry of Agriculture, Israel. (Hebrew)
5. *Jerusalem Post*, 5 February, 1981 and 25 March, 1981.
6. *Koteret Rashit* (Hebrew), 3 August, 1983, p. 9. Details of these negotiations were confirmed by an Israeli foreign ministry official.



7. *Ma'ariv*, 4 October, 1981.
8. 'Israel Enter Africa By Way of Egypt – And Danger Lurks' *New African*, 177, June, 1982, p. 50.
9. For reports of Sharon's visit see, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 November, 1981; *Ma'ariv*, 27 November, 1981 and *Ha'aretz*, 4 December, 1981.
10. *Ma'ariv*, 17 May, 1982
11. *Ma'ariv*, 10 December, 1981.
12. *Ma'ariv*, 7 December, 1981; *Jerusalem Post*, 10 December and *Davar* (Hebrew), 30 December, 1981.
13. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/6908/ii, 17 December, 1981.
14. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/6909/ii, 18 December, 1981.
15. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Middle East and Africa (FBIS/MEA), *Daily Report*, 31 December, 1981, p. I5.
16. Interviews with Israeli officials who were posted in Ghana at the time.
17. Interviews with Israeli officials who had served as interest officers in Africa.
18. *Jerusalem Post*, 6 December, 1981.
19. *Al Hamishmar* (Hebrew), 9 March, 1982. Also see: Siradiou Diallo, 'Le Trilogue de Francois Mitterand', *Jeune Afrique*, 1106, 17 March, 1982, pp. 64-67.
20. *The Guardian*, 17 May, 1982.
21. *Jerusalem Post*, 20 May, 1982.
22. *Jerusalem Post*, 4 December, 1981 and *International Herald Tribune*, 4 December, 1981. Mobutu mentioned that the Central African Republic, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Togo were the countries most likely to join him.
23. *Ma'ariv*, 17 May, 1982.
24. Quoted in Godwin Matatu, 'The Star of David and the Torch of Mobutu', *Africa*, 131, July 1982, p. 44.
25. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 25 May, 1982, p. S2.
26. Quoted in 'Mobutu's Calculated Risk', *Jerusalem Post*, 28 November, 1982.
27. *Le Monde*, 21 May, 1982.
28. *Jerusalem Post*, 21 May, 1982.
29. Interview with Israeli official. Jerusalem, June, 1983.
30. Kaye Whiteman, 'President Mitterand and Africa', *African Affairs*, 82, 328, 1983, p. 337.

31. For details of this military protocol see FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 2 December, 1982, p. 19.
32. *International Herald Tribune*, 5-6 June, 1982.
33. *Ha'aretz*, 18 January, 1983.
34. *Ma'ariv*, 2 December, 1982.
35. See 'Zaire, Facing the Future', *Israel Economist*, May, 1983, p. 51.
36. Interview with Israeli official. Jerusalem, June, 1983.
37. *Ma'ariv*, 2 December, 1982.
38. 'Zaire, Facing the Future', p. 55. Information about this project was also supplied by Agrinoor.
39. *Ma'ariv*, 2 December, 1982.
40. *Ibid.*,
41. *Ma'ariv*, 18 and 19 January, 1983; *Jerusalem Post*, 21 January, 1983 and *The Times*, 24 January, 1983.
42. *Jerusalem Post*, 27 January, 1983.
43. *Jerusalem Post*, 24 January, 1983.
44. *Jerusalem Post*, 27 January, 1983.
45. *Africa Economic Digest*, 24, May, 1985, p. 10.
46. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 11 September, 1985, p. S1.
47. *Africa Economic Digest*, 1, February, 1985, p. 9 and *West Africa*, 18 February, 1985, p. 329.
48. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 11 September, 1985, p. S1.
49. See *Ma'ariv*, 16 May, 1982, *Ha'aretz*, 16, 17 May, 1982 and *The Times*, 17 May, 1982.
50. For statement see FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 21 May, 1982, p. T2. and BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/7030/ii, 19 May, 1982.
51. For full statement see *Weekly Review* (Nairobi), 28 May, 1982, p. 52.
52. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 24 May 1982, p. C3; *Arab Press* (Riyadh), 16, 18, 21 May, 1982 and *Gulf Times* (Doha), 17 May, 1982.
53. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 19 May, 1982, p. C6.
54. *Le Monde*, 20 May, 1982.
55. *Jerusalem Post*, 19 May, 1982
56. *Africa Economic Digest*, 2 September, 1983.
57. *Africa Research Bulletin*, June, 1982, p. 6508.
58. *Ma'ariv*, 28 May, 1982.
59. Interview with Israeli official. Jerusalem, June, 1983.
60. *Jeune Afrique*, 1145, 15 December, 1982, p. 34.
61. *Ma'ariv*, 28 November, 1982.

62. *Ha'aretz*, 30 January, 1983; *Ma'ariv*, 9 May, 1983 and *Ha'aretz* 14 August, 1983.
63. *Jerusalem Post*, 20 March, 1983.
64. *Koteret Rashit*, 3 August, 1983, p. 9.
65. *Africa Economic Digest*, 2 September, 1983, p. 3.
66. 'African Auction', *Jerusalem Post*, 18 August, 1983.
67. *West Africa*, 4 July, 1983, p. 1581; *Ma'ariv*, 20 June, 1983 and *Ha'aretz*, 20 June, 1983.
68. *Africa Report*, September-October, 1983, p. 31.
69. *Ma'ariv*, 7 August, 1983.
70. *West Africa*, 22 August, 1983, p. 1978.
71. Interview with Israeli official. See also *Daily Telegraph*, 23 August, 1983 and *The Times*, 25 August, 1983.
72. *Ha'aretz*, 23 August, 1983.
73. *The Times*, 25 August, 1983.
74. *Jerusalem Post*, 24 August, 1983.
75. For details see, *West Africa*, 5 September, 1983, p. 2050 and *Africa Research Bulletin*, August, 1983, p. 6961.
76. *West Africa*, 6 February, 1984, p. 305.
77. Doe was featured on the front pages of Israeli newspapers inspecting a Galil assault rifle. See, for example, *Jerusalem Post*, 25 August, 1983.
78. *Africa Research Bulletin*, August, 1983, p. 6961.
79. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 5 June, 1984, p. 16.
80. *Africa Report*, 28, November-December, 1983, p. 32.
81. *Koteret Rashit*, 3 August, 1983, p. 8.
82. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 25 August, 1983, p. 13.
83. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/7476/ii, 28 October, 1983.
84. FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 19 August, 1983, p. A4.
85. *Jeune Afrique*, 1255, 23 January, 1985, p. 19; *Ma'ariv*, 22 January, 1985 and *Ha'aretz*, 31 March, 1985.
86. For an example of this debate see 'Round Table Discussion on the Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Israel and Nigeria', *Nigerian Forum*, 2, July/August/September, pp. 647-730. For an overview of Israeli-Nigerian relations see Olu-sola Ojo, 'Nigeria and Israel', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 8, 1, 1986, pp. 76-101.
87. E.C. Ebo, 'Extracts from a Motion in the National Assembly: On the Renewal of Diplomatic Relations by Nigeria and Other African States', *Nigerian Forum* 2, July/August/September, 1982, pp.

88. 740-45 and the reply by Akinyemi, 'Open Letter to Members of the National Assembly on Nigeria-Israel Relations', *Ibid.*, pp. 731-39.
89. For details of the Dikko affair see *The Times*, 7, 13, 14, July, 1984 and 'The Trial Of Dikko's Kidnappers', *Concord Weekly*, 25 February, 1985.
90. *West Africa*, 27 August, 1984, p. 1713.
91. *Africa Research Bulletin*, September, 1984, p. 7392.
92. For Houphouet Boigny's speech see *Ma'ariv*, 15 October, 1985 and *West Africa*, 21 October, 1985, p. 2193.
93. *Jerusalem Post*, 19 December, 1985 and *Africa Research Bulletin*, January, 1986, pp. 7912-14.
94. Sennen Andriannou, 'Houphouet a-t-il Raison', *Jeune Afrique*, 1186, 28 September, 1983, p. 30.
95. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/8139/B/12, 20 December 1985.
96. *Ha'aretz*, 19 December, 1985.
97. *West Africa*, 6 January, 1986, p. 40; *Jerusalem Post*, 13 February, 1986 and *Ma'ariv*, 16 February, 1986.
98. The Israeli aid was the first foreign assistance to reach Cameroon thus, by chance, reinforcing the image of Israel as a country eager to assist and quick to respond, to the needs of African states
99. Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict* (1987), p. 192.
100. *Jerusalem Post*, 26 August, 1986.
101. *Ma'ariv*, 3 December, 1984 and *Ha'aretz*, 25 December, 1984.
102. *Ha'aretz*, 28 August, 1986.
103. *Jerusalem Post*, 28 August, 1986 quoting Jane's Defense Weekly.
104. *Africa Research Bulletin*, July, 1987, p. 8550.
105. *Jerusalem Post*, 17 June, 1987.
106. *Jerusalem Post*, 19 June, 1987 and *Ha'aretz*, 19 June, 1987.
107. *Jerusalem Post*, 24 June, 1987.
108. For details of Arens visit see *Ha'aretz*, 27 & 28 August, 1989 and *Jerusalem Post*, 28 August, 1989.
109. *Jerusalem Post*, 25 December, 1988.
110. *Ha'aretz*, 25 December, 1988.
111. *Ha'aretz*, 25 December, 1988 and *Jerusalem Post*, 25 December, 1988.
112. *International Herald Tribune*, 14-15 January, 1989.
113. Quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, 24 March, 1989.

114. *Jerusalem Post*, 18 July, 1989.
115. *L'Action* (Tunis), 18 May, 1982.
116. Oded, *Africa and the Middle East Conflict*, p. 206.
117. *Africa Research Bulletin*, May, 1982, p. 6462.
118. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/8139/ii, 20 December, 1985.
119. *Weekly Review*, 21 May, 1982, p. 1.
120. For the positions of the OAU on the Palestinian problem see chapter five pp.104-05.
121. For the full list of those states see *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 28, 3, Spring, 1989, p. 175-75.
122. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, ME/7426/ii, 31 August, 1983.

## 7

## The Ultimate Constraint? Israel's Relations with South Africa

There are few issues in Israel's foreign policy that have aroused as much controversy as its relations with South Africa. In recent years, Israel has been singled out and condemned for its ties with the South African government. Israel has been regarded as South Africa's principal economic partner, its prime military ally, and has been denounced for bearing the main responsibility for the survival of the apartheid regime. Israel's critics have pointed to this relationship as confirmation of the illegitimacy and the racist nature of Zionism. They have set out to portray Israel and South Africa as fellow pariah states, which, drawn together by a shared ideology, have created an alliance which poses a threat to international peace and security, and have capitalized on this issue in their efforts to ostracize Israel from the international community. In response, Israel has tried to downplay the importance of these ties, pointing to their comparative insignificance, referred to the duplicity of its critics, and has attacked the double standards of international morality. For many of Israel's supporters, however, its association with the South African government has been a source of embarrassment and consternation.

The controversial nature of this relationship has also been reflected in the way in which relations between Israel and South Africa have been reported, and in the literature on the subject. A large proportion of the commentary is extremely rhetorical, the analysis contrived and the conclusions distorted. Much of it forms the part of the propaganda designed to further isolate Israel in the Third World, and in particular Africa. Israeli-South African relations have been portrayed as possessing a unique and special quality, one which differentiates it from other bilateral relationships. The basis of this relationship, it is argued, is a communality of interests and a shared racist ideology. The two countries have been invariably depicted as similar exploitative settler societies, bound together in an unholy alliance.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, there are those who try to justify these ties with a 'conviction bordering on obduracy', by minimising the level of contacts and by highlighting the extensive role that other countries, especially the Arabs, have played in sustaining the rule of apartheid in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> Absent has been a concern for scholarship.

Instead, of focussing attention on the real issues at hand, discussion has been primarily directed at either exaggerating or absolving Israel's role in South Africa.

No inquiry on Israeli-African relations would be complete without reference to Israel's ties with South Africa. The African states have been outraged by Israel's support for their principal enemy on the continent and have been at the forefront of the worldwide condemnation of this relationship. This chapter does not aim to present an exhaustive coverage of Israel's relations with South Africa; such a task is beyond the scope of this book. Rather the purpose here is limited to an evaluation of the impact of this critical relationship on Israel's relations with the Black African states. Accordingly, the chapter highlights the main areas of exchange and the major developments between Israel and South Africa. It discusses the way this relationship has been portrayed and its effect on Israel's image and standing in the international community, especially in Africa. Specifically, it assesses the extent to which Israel's links with South Africa have hindered its efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations in Africa and examines if, and in what ways, Israel has adjusted its relations with South Africa in order to further its goals on the African continent.

In November 1947, when the United Nations voted to partition Palestine, South Africa joined thirty-two other members in voting in favour of the establishment of a Jewish state. Furthermore, despite the history of anti-semitism in the Nationalist Party, South Africa was one of the first countries to recognize Israel and in 1953 its Prime Minister Daniel Malan was the first Head of Government to visit Jerusalem. Despite this early recognition by South Africa, the development of ties between the two countries was minimal. Israel did not open an embassy in South Africa but maintained a legation in Pretoria and a consulate in Johannesburg. South Africa, in order to promote relations with the Arab world, chose to be represented in Tel Aviv by the British embassy. Relations were, nonetheless, generally harmonious.

With its decision at the start of the 1960s to seek the friendship of the new African states and expand its influence in the Third World, Israel began to display an increasingly critical and hostile attitude toward South Africa. When the President of Upper Volta, Maurice Yameogo, visited Jerusalem in July 1961 a joint statement was issued which described apartheid as being 'disadvantageous to the non white majority in the land'.<sup>3</sup> In October of the same year, Israel voted in the United Nations Political Committee to censure a speech by the

South African foreign minister, Eric Louw, because of its 'offensive, fictitious and erroneous remarks'. Finally, in November Israel supported a resolution at the United Nations which denounced the system of apartheid in South Africa as, reprehensible and repugnant to the dignity and rights of peoples and individuals.<sup>4</sup>

The South African government reacted angrily to this sudden change in Israel's position. In retaliation, it withdrew the financial concession that had been granted to South African Jews allowing them to transfer money to Israel. As relations with the Black African states flourished, so Israel's ties with Pretoria deteriorated. In 1963 Israel unilaterally reduced its representation to the level of a consulate and withdrew all its senior diplomats from Pretoria. Israel's willingness to lend its support to the cause of the African states culminated in its vote in 1966 at the United Nations to relieve South Africa of its mandate over Namibia.

Israel's victory in the Six Day War in 1967 led to a visible improvement in the atmosphere of its relations with South Africa. The general reaction in South Africa to Israel's victory was one of praise and admiration. Comparisons were quickly drawn between Israel's position in the Middle East and their own situation in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> In a show of support the South African government lifted the restrictions it had imposed on the transfer of funds by South African Jews to Israel. An immediate result of the improved atmosphere between the two countries was the expansion of a series of economic links. In an effort to promote commercial ties Israel appointed a Trade Commissioner in Pretoria and an Israel-South African Trade Association was established in Tel Aviv. The exchange of a number of trade and commercial delegations led to a marked increase in the volume of trade and the development of a number of joint commercial ventures. In 1967 the volume of trade between the two countries amounted to little over \$7 million. In a matter of two years this figure doubled. By 1973 the level of trade had risen to \$44.1 million with the balance clearly in the favour of South Africa. Israel's imports from South Africa stood at \$32.4 million while exports from Israel amounted to \$11.9 million.

The development of a network of trade and commercial ties did not lead, however, to a change or improvement in relations at the political level. Relations between Israel and South Africa remained decidedly frosty. In spite of repeated requests by the South African government, Israel consistently refused to upgrade the level of its representation in Pretoria. It was not until 1972 that Israel allowed South Africa to open a consulate in Tel Aviv. Moreover, Israel conti-

nued to openly condemn and vote against South Africa at various international meetings. In an effort to bolster its position in Africa and emphasise its opposition to the continued system of apartheid in South Africa, Israel even offered, in April 1971, to make a financial contribution to the OAU African Liberation Committee. Though this offer was rejected it provoked an angry response by South Africa. Again the South African government withdrew the right of South African Jews to transfer money to Israel.

It was the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 which marked the turning point in the development of relations between Israel and South Africa. As in 1967 South Africa declared its unequivocal support for Israel. Its defence minister, P.W. Botha, announced that 'within our means and without declaring war', South Africa would provide assistance to Israel in its war effort. Prime Minister John Vorster added that the defeat of Israel would have very serious consequences for South Africa.<sup>6</sup> Once more, in an act of solidarity and support, the South African government allowed South African Jews to transfer funds to Israel. There were also unconfirmed reports that South Africa sent Mirage jets to fight alongside the Israeli forces and that one of these planes was shot down over the Sinai by Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

The mass severing of diplomatic relations by the African states during the war led to an angry backlash in Israel. Embittered by the desertion of the Africans, many in Israel began to call for the development of closer ties with South Africa. The open display of support by South Africa, while the rest of the world was abandoning its cause, was noted in Israel. In an editorial *Ha'aretz* urged the Israeli government to normalize its relations with South Africa, which it described as a friend that had proved itself in Israel's darkest hour.<sup>8</sup> Soon after the war, Chaim Herzog, later to become Israel's ambassador to the United Nations and Israel's fifth President, outlined a number of foreign policy initiatives which Israel should undertake to strengthen its international position.<sup>9</sup> Among them was a recommendation for the improvement of relations with South Africa. This would be to Israel's advantage, Herzog argued, not only because South Africa was the strongest power in Africa but, more importantly, because, in his opinion, it would be able to withstand any economic pressure that the Arabs and the Third World countries might try to apply.

It was only after the mass severance of relations by the African states in October 1973 and the passage in November 1975 at the United Nations of the resolution which equated Zionism with racism, that Israel changed its position toward South Africa. Disillusioned by the rejection of the African states and ostracized by the international

community, Israel began to develop a series of close and friendly relations with South Africa.

At the beginning of 1974, Israel decided to upgrade the level of its representation in South Africa and appointed its first ambassador to Pretoria. The South African government followed this lead and in 1975 opened an embassy in Tel Aviv. The setting up of these embassies led to the exchange of visits by ministers and government officials. Israel dropped the restrictions on its ministers which had allowed them, before 1973, to visit South Africa only in connection with matters of Jewish concern. During 1974 a series of visits between Israeli and South African officials took place in order to discuss areas of future cooperation. These were followed by two visits by the South African minister of the interior, Connie Mulder, in June 1975 and March 1976, who held a series of talks with Israel's Prime Minister and foreign minister.

Trade took on an added impetus. The decision to target South Africa as a preferred export market for Israeli products had the immediate result of doubling, in 1974 alone, the volume of exports from Israel to South Africa. There was also a noticeable change in Israel's voting record at the United Nations on the issue of apartheid. Instead of voting in condemnation of South Africa, as it had consistently done before 1973, Israel began to absent itself from the chamber or abstain in the vote.

Israel's new approach in its relations with South Africa was dramatically underlined in April 1976. Disillusioned with world opinion in the aftermath of United Nations' 'Zionism is Racism' resolution, Israel had little hesitation in inviting the South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, to make an official visit to Jerusalem. Vorster's visit was a public confirmation that Israel's policy of coolness, and at times outright hostility, toward the South African regime was finally over. There was little criticism in Israel of the decision to invite Vorster and no effort was made to downplay his trip. On the contrary, Vorster was warmly received. His visit, which lasted for nearly a week, was remarkable for the demonstrative manner in which it was conducted. Vorster met with all the major political leaders, toured military installations, factories and kibbutzim. Throughout the visit the two states repeatedly stressed the depth of support and friendship that existed between them.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the visit Israel and South Africa signed a series of wide-ranging accords for economic, scientific and industrial cooperation. Announcing these agreements at a press conference in Jerusalem, Vorster stated that the two governments had decided to establish a joint Ministerial

Committee which would meet at least once a year to review the situation of economic relations between the two countries. Its main purpose, Vorster explained, was to discuss ways and means of expanding economic cooperation, and in particular, to facilitate investment, to develop scientific cooperation and to plan future projects which would utilize South African raw materials and Israeli manpower.<sup>11</sup>

Vorster's trip to Israel was heralded in South Africa as a major success. It was seen as moving the country's foreign policy in an entirely new direction. The agreements on economic cooperation were described as the most far reaching of their kind that South Africa had ever concluded with another country.<sup>12</sup> An editorial in the *Rand Daily Mail* declared:

There is no gainsaying the signal nature of Mr Vorster's triumph this week. By achieving a publicly announced economic, scientific and industrial pact with Israel he has done far more than merely formalize bonds that have, in any case, been growing stronger. He has in fact acquired for South Africa a public friend, an avowed ally.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, Vorster's visit to Israel and the signing of the accords was condemned throughout the world and was received with anger by many of Israel's friends. This adverse international reaction and the subsequent appointment of Shlomo Avineri as the new director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry led to Israel lowering the profile of its relations with South Africa. In November 1976, less than six months after Vorster's visit, Israel announced that it intended to review its links with Pretoria. Though senior Israeli ministers were invited to visit South Africa, the invitations were politely declined.

This lull in the development of relations lasted until the victory of Menachem Begin and the formation of the first Likud government in May 1977. The new Likud ministers did not share the reservations expressed by some Labour Party members over the question of relations with South Africa. The South African government, for its part, expressed great satisfaction over the victory of the Likud. Begin was a strong supporter of ties with South Africa and was, at the time, the chairman of the Israel-South Africa Friendship Society. Shortly after the changeover in power the South African foreign minister, R.F. Botha, visited Israel to express his government's support for Begin's new ruling coalition and to reaffirm the friendship between

the two countries. Thereafter, relations began to flourish in a number of different areas.

Economic cooperation was ostensibly the core of the accords signed in 1976. These agreements led to a notable increase in the volume of trade and commercial transactions between the two countries. This new economic partnership was reinforced by the visits of the finance ministers of the two countries and a series of meetings by senior officials. In February 1978, Simcha Ehrlich became the first Israeli minister to make an official visit to South Africa. During the course of his stay Ehrlich concluded a number of financial agreements and attended the inaugural meeting of the joint Israeli-South African ministerial committee which the two countries had decided to establish during Vorster's visit. His visit was quickly followed by two large delegations of Israeli businessmen. Two years later, in December 1980, the South African finance minister, Owen Horwood, accompanied by a large delegation of businessmen and officials, arrived in Israel to bolster economic ties. The financial agreements arising from these visits resulted in the extension of a substantial line of credit to Israel for the import of South African products and raw materials, provided for South African investments in Israel on a variety of projects and authorized for the first time the sale of Israeli bonds in South Africa.<sup>14</sup>

These agreements also gave rise to the expansion of trade between the two countries. Within three years of Vorster's visit, South African exports to Israel had tripled to \$151.1 million. Exports from Israel also increased and by 1981 stood at just under \$100 million. (See Table 7.1) The composition of this trade showed a noted change from one previously consisting of food, textiles to one now dominated by raw materials and industrial products. South Africa imported plastics, chemicals, electronics and machinery from Israel and exported coal, iron and steel, ferro-alloys, asbestos, timber, machine tools and chemicals for pharmaceutical industries. Of these, it was the supply of steel and coal that accounted for the bulk of South Africa's exports to Israel. Nearly half of Israel's imported steel came from South Africa. This in turn represented some 40 per cent of South Africa's declared exports to Israel.<sup>15</sup> With the decision of Israel to convert the power station at Hadera to run off coal steam, coal became the most important of Israel's imports from South Africa. In 1979 Israel and South Africa negotiated an agreement whereby South Africa would provide twenty-three million tons of coal annually. Through this arrangement South Africa became Israel's main source of coal and a vital supplier of its energy needs.<sup>16</sup> Despite the increase in the level



Table 7.1: Israel's Trade with South Africa 1973-1985, (US\$ million)

	Exports	Imports
1973	12.0	27.5
1974	28.7	38.4
1975	34.7	40.2
1976	26.7	44.9
1977	23.9	51.9
1978	37.7	80.4
1979	48.2	153.1
1980	79.2	118.7
1981	98.6	103.2
1982	74.2	166.8
1983	82.8	169.6
1984	104.4	165.1
1985	63.8	174.7

Source: Government of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 1974-1986* (Annual).

of trade, the figures remained a minute fraction of the total volume of trade for each country. The South African market still accounted for barely one per cent of Israel's exports and imports from South Africa amounted to only two per cent of its total imports. For South Africa the figures were even more marginal. The volume of trade with Israel accounted for less than one per cent of the total value of its trade.<sup>17</sup>

It is, however, difficult to ascertain the true value of the trade relationship. The figures issued by both Israel and South Africa exclude various items. Specifically, arms sales and electronic technology with military application are not included. In addition, the import of rough diamonds by Israel, most of which originate from South Africa but are bought through the De Beers central selling organization in London, are not found in the official statistics for trade between the two countries. If these items are taken into consideration the trade relationship takes on a different perspective. It has been estimated that with their inclusion the total value of trade would be raised by as much as one billion dollars and would make Israel qualify as one of South Africa's most important trading partners.<sup>18</sup>

A further dimension of the economic cooperation between Israel and South Africa consisted of investments in each other's economies and the creation of joint Israeli-South African companies. South

African businessmen invested in a variety of economic enterprises in Israel. This investment in Israel was facilitated by the relaxation of the stringent laws restricting the flow of capital out of the country. During Ehrlich's visit in 1978 agreement was reached which allowed South African businessmen to invest up to \$41.4 million in Israel. Two years later, following Horwood's visit to Israel, this limit was raised to \$60 million. Furthermore, South African investors were permitted to conduct transactions in Israel at Pretoria's official rate of exchange for the rand which was 30 per cent higher than the world rate. This concession had the effect of giving South African businessmen a far larger return on their investment than they would normally have expected to receive.<sup>19</sup>

An additional attraction for South African industrialists to establish joint economic enterprises and invest in Israel arose from the opportunity afforded them to use Israel as a bridgehead to Western European and American markets. Goods manufactured in Israel or having a minimum Israeli added value of 40-50 per cent are eligible for duty-free entry into the EEC; Israeli-manufactured products are permitted free entry into the United States. During his trip to South Africa, Ehrlich told investors that because of its duty free policy toward industrial goods, Israel could offer them an 'attractive packet' for the export of industrial goods to both the European Common Market and the United States.<sup>20</sup> The most important of these joint companies was Iskoor. Forty-nine per cent of Iskoor was owned by the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR). The remaining fifty-one per cent was held by Koor Industries, the giant industrial conglomerate owned by the Israeli trade union movement, the Histadrut. Through this arrangement semi-processed iron and steel was shipped to Israel, finished at the jointly-owned Iskoor factory near Tel Aviv and then reexported by Israel through to Europe and the United States as either refined steel or as part of finished products.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the creation of joint commercial ventures with Israeli companies allowed the circumvention of western sanctions and the access of South African goods to markets which might otherwise have been closed or open to them under less favourable terms.<sup>22</sup>

Without question the most controversial aspect of the Israeli-South African relationship has been the issue of military and nuclear cooperation. The full extent of these military ties is not known. On account of their sensitive nature, these links are shrouded in secrecy. Israeli and South African officials are extremely reluctant to talk about these ties and are quick to deny any form of military cooperation between the two countries.<sup>23</sup> This issue has attracted wide-

spread attention. Unfortunately, many of the reports, and the information offered, is very problematic and unreliable. All too often the evidence cited is either circumstantial or speculative. As a result, a large part of the discussion on these ties has been based on presumption rather than on verifiable sources.<sup>24</sup>

According to reports, Israel has sold South Africa a variety of military hardware and electronic equipment, and more importantly, has supplied technology data packages containing the designs for several Israeli weapon systems which have subsequently been assembled by South Africa's own military industries. Israel constantly and vehemently denied these reports, insisting that it was complying with the United Nations Security Council's decision of November 1977 to impose an arms embargo on South Africa. However, rather than coming to a halt, cooperation in military research, development and production continued unabated. While it is nearly impossible to ascertain the true value of this arms trade, it has been estimated that military contracts from South Africa are worth as much as \$500 million a year to Israel, with the jobs of several thousand workers in Israel's military industries dependent on sales and joint ventures with South Africa.<sup>25</sup>

Israel has encountered the most severe criticism for its military cooperation with South Africa. The following may be taken as illustrative of the tone and the damning way in which this aspect of their relationship has been portrayed:

South Africa has put together a powerful military machine and an accomplished arms industry. South African troops ... have mastered the arts of wreaking terror and intimidation on the civilian populations of weaker neighbours. South Africa could only have done a small part of all this without Israel. Over the past decade Israel has sold and smuggled weapons to the South African government, led it down the path to nuclear weapons capability, helped it develop its own arms industry and introduced it to prospective customers. The Israelis have also taught the South Africans their own techniques for prevailing over an enraged majority.<sup>26</sup>

The prominence and constant attention that these military links have attracted and, in particular, the belief in the existence of an Israeli-South African nuclear conspiracy has brought considerable damage to Israel's international reputation. Its cooperation with South Africa in the military and nuclear field has reinforced, more

than anything else, the image of Israel as a pariah state closely allied with a fellow outcast.

The history of military cooperation between Israel and South Africa dates back to the mid 1960s. In 1967, after France had imposed an arms embargo on Israel, South Africa reportedly came to Israel's assistance by supplying the crucial spare parts for the French-made arms. There were also reports that South African Mirage jets were used by Israel during both the Six Day and the Yom Kippur Wars.<sup>27</sup> Shortly after Israel's victory in June 1967, several high-level military delegations from South Africa arrived in Israel to study the tactics of the Israeli Defence Force. In return, General Mordechai Hod, the Commander of the Israeli Air Force, flew to South Africa to address officers at the South African staff college.

After October 1973 the exchange of these visits by military personnel became more frequent. During a visit to South Africa in 1974, Moshe Dayan, declared that Israel was very interested in maintaining close relations with South Africa. 'South Africa', he remarked, 'belongs to the free world and must take its military problems seriously'.<sup>28</sup> Meir Amit, the former head of Israel's intelligence services, revealed that senior Israeli military officers had started to visit South Africa on a regular basis and were lecturing South African officers on methods of modern warfare and counter-insurgency strategies.<sup>29</sup>

With the growth of Israel's arms industry, South Africa became an increasingly important market. The visit by John Vorster in 1976 led to the consolidation and further expansion of cooperation in this sphere. Vorster toured many strategic installations in Israel including the naval base at Sharm el Sheik and the Israel Aircraft Industries near Tel Aviv, where he inspected the Israeli fighter plane, the Kfir. Though both governments vehemently denied that agreements for military cooperation were included in the accords signed in 1976, a large part of the discussions revolved around the question of future military collaboration. The South African *Star* commented that the pacts signed during the trip went far beyond those normally agreed between friendly countries: 'At the root of the pact is a mutual exchange of materials and military know-how which both countries desperately need'.<sup>30</sup> After Vorster's visit, cooperation between the two countries in this sphere expanded in a number of diverse areas. The nature of these exchanges can be divided into three categories: i) the direct sale of Israeli arms to South Africa; ii) cooperation in the development and the financing of weapons systems; and iii) training

in counter-insurgency techniques and the sharing of intelligence information.

The list of the known sales of Israeli military hardware to South Africa is limited. Israel supplied the South African navy with six Reshef-class warships equipped with the Gabriel surface to surface missile and six Dabur coastal patrol boats, also armed with the Gabriel missile. Israel also trained the South African navy in the use of this equipment.<sup>31</sup> As well as buying arms directly from Israel, the South African defence industries manufactured a number of Israeli weapons under licence. Since the early 1960s it had been producing the Israeli Uzi sub-machine gun under a licence obtained from a Belgian company and in 1981 Israel sold South Africa the rights to manufacture the Galil rifle. South Africa was allowed to build up to nine of the Reshef and Dabur gunboats under license from Israel. South Africa also received permission to manufacture the Scorpion missile which is based on the Gabriel.<sup>32</sup>

South Africa supplied Israel with a specially hardened rare steel needed for the production of its Merkava tank.<sup>33</sup> In exchange for this steel, Israel modernized 150 South African Centurion tanks and provided the armour-plating for most of South Africa's armed vehicles. In order to obtain this steel Israel reportedly agreed to supply South Africa with a substantial number of the Merkava tank itself.<sup>34</sup>

The supply of military hardware was only one aspect of the arms trade between the two countries. Equally important was the purchase by South Africa of Israeli technology and electronics with military related applications. In 1977, it was reported that three of Israel's leading electronic companies, Tadiran, Elbit and Israel Aviation Industries, were selling South Africa a large number of items, ranging from complete radar stations to electronic fences, anti-guerilla infiltration alarm systems, computers and night vision devices.<sup>35</sup> Additional cooperation in the supply of military technology was revealed in 1983 when an unmanned drone aircraft was shot down over Mozambique. These drones are directed by a complex combination of cameras, computers and electronics and can be used to monitor troop movements and other military activity. The drone was identified as being of the 'Scout' type, manufactured by the Israel Aircraft Industries, and used extensively by Israel in its operations in Lebanon.<sup>36</sup>

Together with this supply of military hardware and military related technology, it has been reported that Israel and South Africa were secretly cooperating in the development of a new generation fighter aircraft. The reports concentrated on two issues. First, South

Africa was believed to have been a silent partner in the financing of the, now cancelled, Lavi project, the planned production of a new Israeli combat aircraft. In return for its investment, South Africa would have received the Lavi for its own air force and would have shared in the export earnings generated by the sale of the aircraft.<sup>37</sup> Second, Israel supplied South Africa with components of the Kfir as well as much of the new technology and avionics for the production of its own fighter plane, the Cheetah.<sup>38</sup> Other reports of Israeli-South African collaboration in the production of new weapon systems included the development of an 850 ton guided-missile corvette, and the construction in South Africa of a nuclear powered submarine to a joint Israeli-South African design.<sup>39</sup> Recently speculation has begun to surface that Israel and South Africa have been secretly developing and plan to test an advanced version of the Israeli intermediate-range missile, the Jericho.<sup>40</sup>

The final area of military cooperation has been the training of the South African armed forces by Israeli personnel. Since the middle of the 1960s Israeli officers arrived in South Africa to instruct the South African military on strategies and methods of modern warfare. As relations developed during the 1970s the exchange of military personnel became more frequent. Several Israeli generals, including ex-chief of staff Rafael Eitan, visited Namibia and reportedly offered advice on counter-insurgency warfare.<sup>41</sup> An article in the *Sunday Times* alleged that there were as many as 300 active Israeli officers and servicemen in South Africa training the South African forces.<sup>42</sup> The article also maintained that there were, at any one time, several hundred South Africans in Israel receiving training in weapon systems, battle strategy and counter insurgency warfare. Israel's instruction of the South African armed forces is thought to have included the planning of military operations. Specifically, Israel has been accused of participating in the planning and execution of the South African invasions of Angola in 1975 and in 1983.<sup>43</sup> When defense minister Ariel Sharon visited South Africa at the end of 1981, he inspected South African troops in Namibia along the Angolan border.<sup>44</sup> There were also several reports that Israeli personnel have even been engaged in combat situations in Southern Africa. In 1976 representatives of the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) declared that their forces had clashed with Israeli troops.<sup>45</sup>

The most sensitive aspect of Israeli-South African relations has been the issue of cooperation in the development of nuclear technology and weapons. Talk of such cooperation began shortly after the signing of the 1976 agreement for scientific cooperation. At the press

conference at the end of his visit to Jerusalem, Vorster spoke of the intention of utilizing South African raw materials and Israeli manpower in joint projects. Vorster's statement has been broadly interpreted as implying agreement for the exchange of Israeli technical expertise in return for the supply of South African uranium. It has been regarded as 'conventional wisdom' that Israel and South Africa started to collaborate in this area and that Israel became the instrumental partner in enabling South Africa to develop a nuclear capability.

Most of the discussion concerning this cooperation centred around the question of the joint testing of a nuclear device. In August 1977, when US and Soviet satellites discovered South African preparations for an atomic test in the Kalahari desert, it was widely believed that this was the site for a future joint Israeli-South African test. According to a report in *Newsweek*, U.S. intelligence analysts concluded that the device which South Africa had intended to detonate was an Israeli nuclear bomb.<sup>46</sup> Diplomatic pressure on South Africa, at the time, led to the cancellation of any planned test.

Two years later, on 22 September 1979, it is thought that the two countries eventually succeeded in carrying out a nuclear test. A 'bright flash' in the atmosphere above the South Atlantic, just off the coast of South Africa, was detected by a U.S. Vela reconnaissance satellite. A special commission was appointed by President Carter to investigate this incident and determine whether this mysterious flash had been caused by the testing of a nuclear weapon. The commission reported that there was not sufficient evidence to prove conclusively that the flash had been caused by a nuclear detonation. Other scientists differed with the findings of the commission and asserted that the pattern of flashes detected by the satellite was a clear indication of a nuclear explosion.<sup>47</sup> Inevitably, speculation quickly began to circulate that Israel and South Africa had tested a nuclear device. Such speculation was fuelled by the visit to South Africa, shortly after the detection of the flash, by the Israeli nuclear scientist Amos Horev and by the visit to South Africa by Israel's defence minister, Ezer Weizmann, in March 1980. This speculation intensified following reports that a confidential finding, submitted to the National Security Council by the CIA on 20 June 1980, concluded that Israel and South Africa had joined the nuclear club and had jointly-tested a nuclear bomb in the South Atlantic.<sup>48</sup> The controversy surrounding this incident still persists. The question of whether the flash in September 1979 was caused by a nuclear explosion and if so, who was responsible, has yet to be conclusively answered.

Of all the areas of Israeli-South African relations the issue of cooperation in the nuclear sphere is the most problematic. Much of the evidence to substantiate the charges of collaboration is extremely scant and circumstantial.<sup>49</sup> A report by the United Nations' Secretary-General on the 'Implementation of the Denuclearization of Africa' addressed the question of cooperation between the two countries. It concluded:

Particularly in recent years, there has been growing concern about possible nuclear cooperation between South Africa and Israel. Such speculation grew particularly persistent after Prime Minister John Vorster visited Israel in 1976 and signed various agreements on cooperation. However, there have been no official statements to confirm cooperation in the nuclear field. Until specific examples of actual nuclear exchanges or transactions can be cited as clear evidence of such co-operation, this whole question remains in a state of uncertainty.<sup>50</sup>

Nonetheless, despite the lack of firm evidence the allegation that Israel and South Africa have been closely cooperating in the joint production of nuclear weapons is frequently repeated. In particular the 'Vela Satellite' incident has been continuously cited as proof that through their mutual collaboration both countries were able to join the 'nuclear club'.<sup>51</sup>

An additional dimension of Israel's relations in South Africa were the links forged with the Bantustan homelands of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda. Officially Israel has not accorded any recognition to these homelands. However, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and Transkei established trade missions in Tel Aviv staffed by Israelis who purported to act as their official representatives in the country.<sup>52</sup> Despite the lack of formal recognition, the leaders of these homelands became regular visitors to Israel in order to foster links with Israeli industrialists and encourage investments to their homelands. President Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana visited Israel in 1980 and 1983, and President Patrick Mphahlele of Venda visited in 1980. Three years later the entire 32 members of the Venda Chamber of Commerce arrived in Israel. Chief George Matanzima, the Prime Minister of the Transkei, went to Israel in March 1984 and was accompanied on his trip by four of his ministers. These visits resulted in a variety of economic links being developed. Israeli businessmen became involved in numerous business and commercial ventures with these homelands. Among the Israelis who invested in these

enterprises were several prominent politicians from the Likud party including Yoram Aridor, the former Israeli minister of finance.

It was with the Bantustan homeland of Ciskei that Israelis became the most involved. In 1983 alone President Lennox Sebe visited Israel three times. In the following year, he attended a ceremony in Ariel, an Israeli settlement on the occupied West Bank, which twinned the town with Bisho, the capital of Ciskei. By 1984, as many as sixty Israeli entrepreneurs were investing in Ciskei and at least ten Israeli-owned factories, ranging from textiles to pharmaceuticals, had been built in the homeland. Israeli doctors worked in Ciskei hospitals; an Israeli-run company, Gur Construction, secured contracts to build two hospitals; and Israeli companies, some of which received state finance, started to organize various educational and agricultural development programmes.<sup>53</sup>

Israelis were also involved in offering military and paramilitary assistance to Ciskei. The former military adviser to Lennox Sebe, Major General Tallifer Minnaar, confirmed that he had accompanied Sebe on a trip to Israel in 1983 in order to buy arms for Ciskei.<sup>54</sup> In 1984 a group of 18 Ciskean pilots arrived in Israel to undergo training at the Dror flying school in Herzelia. Though ostensibly this training was for crop spraying it was reported that those pilots were to form the nucleus of a future Ciskei airforce. The flying school was run by an Israeli businessman, Ira Kertis, who had already sold two Mooney 231 light aircraft to Ciskei.<sup>55</sup> A private Israeli security company secured a large contract with the Ciskei military to train and arm military units. This company also trained a special unit to guard President Sebe and was made responsible for the security arrangements at the independence celebrations of Ciskei in 1983.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, there were reports that Israelis helped Lennox Sebe establish an intelligence network in Ciskei.<sup>57</sup>

The Israeli government was extremely embarrassed by these links with the Bantustans, fearing that the demonstrative manner in which those relations were conducted would jeopardize its efforts in Africa. In an attempt to counter the adverse effect of these ties with the Bantustans, it banned any official contact with the homelands at the end of 1983 and barred officials from meeting any of the leaders or delegations that arrived in Israel.<sup>58</sup> It also began to exert pressure on Israelis involved in commercial activities with the homelands and condemned their activities as harmful to Israeli interests.<sup>59</sup> Vigorous lobbying by the Israeli foreign ministry, and in particular by the director-general, David Kimche, ensured that a large Israeli parliamentary delegation did not attend the opening ceremony of the

Ciskei parliament in August 1985. Kimche personally contacted several of the members of the Knesset who had been invited, informing them that their presence at the ceremony would be viewed in a very negative light by the Black African states and that it would cause considerable damage to Israel's foreign relations in Africa.<sup>60</sup>

The development of Israel's relations with South Africa was of particular concern to the Africans. African states were especially critical and outraged by Israel's links with their principal enemy on the continent. The question of Israel's ties with South Africa was not an important factor in accounting for the decision of the African states to sever diplomatic ties with Israel in 1973. Despite the constant attempts by the Arab states to link Israel with South Africa and to draw comparisons between the two countries, the Africans did not refer to this issue in their communiques and statements. It was only after the break in relations that the OAU addressed the issue of Israel and South Africa. The emergency session of the Council of Ministers in November 1973 was the first OAU meeting to adopt a resolution that included any reference to Israel's relations with South Africa. There, the Africans condemned Israel for its 'open military collusion' with Portugal and South Africa and accused it of coordinating its strategy with South Africa as part of a grand design aimed at encircling and dominating the African continent.<sup>61</sup>

Thereafter, the African states consistently condemned Israel for its collaboration with South Africa. It quickly developed into one of the major issues in the international politics of Africa. This criticism became more vehement following the visit of John Vorster to Israel. The Africans were enraged by Israel's willingness to be so publicly and closely associated with the system of apartheid. 'Israel's active cooperation with South Africa,' an editorial in the *Ghanaian Times* asserted, 'makes it impossible for any African country which is committed to the African Liberation Movement to extend sympathy to its cause in the Middle East'.<sup>62</sup> It suggested that the African states should examine Israel's commercial interests in Africa and should consider, if necessary, nationalizing them. The OAU declared that Vorster's visit showed that the two countries were allied to 'suffocate by all means the legitimate claims to the liberty, to the independence, to the dignity, of the black peoples of Southern Africa.' It urged its members, and the members of the Arab League, to do everything possible to 'break the yoke of racism and Zionism'.<sup>63</sup>

The African states were at the forefront of the condemnation of Israel's ties with South Africa. They repeatedly raised this issue in international meetings and organizations and urged other states to

register their protest against the development of this relationship. The anger and bitterness of the Africans toward Israel for its collaboration with South Africa is well reflected by the concluding remarks by O.O. Fafowora of Nigeria to an United Nations conference devoted exclusively to the relations between South Africa and Israel. Describing the work of the conference as reflecting the concern of the entire African continent, Fafowora urged Israel to abandon its confrontation against Africa. 'Israel', he declared, 'bears a heavy moral responsibility for this gross and unparalleled betrayal in the annals of mankind'. Fafowora regarded Israel's ties with South Africa as presenting 'Africa with enormous security problems with very serious implications for the liberation struggle in Namibia and South Africa'.<sup>64</sup>

In particular, the Council of Ministers meetings and the Heads of State summits of the OAU were a setting where the Africans, after 1973, continually and vigorously denounced Israel for its ties with South Africa. In their condemnation of this relationship, they linked the situation of the blacks in South Africa with the problem of the Palestinians and equated Zionism with apartheid and racism. In the resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian problem, the members of the OAU have repeatedly condemned the Israeli-South African relationship along these lines:

[the OAU] notes with concern that the alliance between the Zionist regime of Israel and the racist regime of South Africa aims at intensifying the acts of terrorism and genocide perpetrated against the peoples of Palestine and Southern Africa.<sup>65</sup>

Together with this protest against the collusion between the two states, the OAU called upon its members to 'increase their efforts to encounter this danger and to strengthen the armed struggle against Zionism, racism and imperialism'.<sup>66</sup> The OAU also maintained that Israel's ties with South Africa was a compelling reason for African states not to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. In the resolutions on the Middle East passed by the Heads of State summits in 1983 and 1984, the OAU called upon its members to 'renew their firm determination not to establish or re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel; a natural and unconditional accomplice of racist South Africa'.<sup>67</sup>

Of all the African states, Nigeria was the most outspoken of Israel's critics. Nigeria's attitude on this issue was clearly and forcefully expressed by its President Shehu Shagari. 'We acted as Africans', he maintained, 'because of Israel's continued co-operation with

racist South Africa. Israel has further intensified this cooperation and we, as Africans, have continued to be horrified by this attitude. So it is not just the question of Israel's quarrel with the Arabs; it has another quarrel with Africa as well. We just cannot ignore Israel's continued and growing friendship with an enemy.'<sup>68</sup>

Nigeria's attitude remained unchanged under the military governments of Muhammadu Buhari and Ibrahim Babangida. Ibrahim Gambari, Buhari's foreign minister, and his replacement Bolaji Akinyemi were known for being extremely critical of Israel's relations with South Africa. Akinyemi's views on this issue were expressed, when he was director of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs. In an open letter, to the members of the National Assembly, he advised against the renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel on account of its ties with South Africa. Akinyemi argued that it was not in Nigeria's interests to resume ties with Israel. He concluded that because of Israel's military, and especially its nuclear cooperation with South Africa, 'Israeli African relations had gone beyond the point of no return'.<sup>69</sup> Israel's relations with South Africa were a major obstacle in Israel's efforts to develop relations with Nigeria. The successive governments of Shagari, Buhari and Babangida adopted an identical position and made the improvement in Nigeria's relations with Israel conditional on Israel's willingness to change its policies toward South Africa.

When Israel first sought diplomatic relations with the new African states and expand its influence in the Third World, it downgraded the level of its representation in South Africa. Faced with the choice between South Africa or Black Africa it unequivocally chose the latter. The decision by Israel, at the beginning of the 1980s, to renew its relations and regain its former position in Africa, did not, however, lead to a corresponding decision to change the nature of its ties with South Africa. Indeed, relations with South Africa continued to prosper. Although there was a fall in the volume of imports from South Africa in 1980 and 1981, this drop was caused solely by economic factors and did not reflect any decision by Israel to reduce the level of trade with South Africa. The volume of trade quickly picked up and soon began to rise steadily. By the end of 1985 the official volume of trade between the countries stood at \$238.5 million with the balance clearly in the favour of South Africa. (See Table 7.1) The agreements allowing for the preferential rate of investment in Israel by South Africans were renewed, and a new agreement for the additional supply of coal to Israel was negotiated. Israel and South Africa also



signed; at the beginning of 1985, accords worth over \$5 million for the joint development of technological and scientific projects.<sup>70</sup>

Contacts at the political level continued to be openly displayed, with little regard for the adverse publicity that this attracted. In October 1984, the South African foreign minister, Pik Botha, made a short visit to Israel. Although Botha's trip was ostensibly a private and not an official one, it nonetheless received widespread coverage in both the Israeli and international media. Botha held lengthy discussions with Israel's foreign minister, Yitzhak Shamir, and defence minister, Yitzhak Rabin, as well as with many other leading politicians and senior officials. Only Prime Minister Shimon Peres refused to meet him.

However, as Israel intensified its efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations with Black African states, its statements condemning apartheid became more frequent and pronounced. Welcoming Samuel Doe to Israel in August 1983, President Chaim Herzog declared:

Nothing unites the people of Africa and the people of Israel more than a hatred of racism. Our people have suffered more than anyone else from racism, have fought and still fight, more than anyone else against this horrible disease that still persists among mankind. Israel and its government have consistently condemned publicly the policy of apartheid, and I take this opportunity to express once more our abhorrence of apartheid and any form of racism wherever it may occur.<sup>71</sup>

This unequivocal condemnation of the system of apartheid in South Africa was reiterated by other Israeli leaders and officials. In the summer of 1985, the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset issued a statement declaring Israel's concern over the imposition of the state of emergency in South Africa.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the Central Committee of the Histadrut expressed its anger against the 'discrimination and persecution of black Trade Union leaders in South Africa and the use of unbridled force against the country's black civilian population'.<sup>73</sup> Israel also expressed its shock at the execution of the black South African poet, Benjamin Molisoie. Speaking on behalf of the Israeli government, Moshe Shahal asserted that Israel could not remain silent at the sight of violence besetting all strata of the South African population.<sup>74</sup> In addition, in an effort to counter the adverse effects of its links with the Bantustans, the Israeli government prohibited any official dealings or contacts.

There were also moves by Israel to broaden the base of its relations in South Africa. One of the major criticisms leveled at Israel was that, in spite of its continuous condemnation of apartheid, it had not made any attempt to develop links with the black community in the country.<sup>75</sup> Efforts were undertaken in 1985 to correct this situation. In August, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi made a lengthy visit to Israel where he spoke with numerous politicians and officials and held two meetings with the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. During his visit Peres assured Buthelezi that Israel would toughen its stance against apartheid. Buthelezi was also promised that Israel would set up agricultural projects in Kwazulu and offer training and assistance to trade unionists, women's organizations and cooperatives in the region.<sup>76</sup>

Links were also established between the Histadrut and black trade unionists in South Africa. At the end of 1985 a delegation from the Histadrut visited South Africa and held talks with leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Union of Miners.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, Yeruham Meshel, the former head of the Histadrut launched a campaign to force Histadrut-owned companies to cease all commercial activities with South Africa. In April 1986, following contacts established by Shimon Zelniker and through the support of the Los Angeles based Center for Foreign Policy Options, the first group of black South African community leaders participated on a three-week course on Community Building and National Development run by the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute in Tel Aviv. Included in the group were Lekau Mathabathe, a co-founder of the Soweto Committee of Ten and Sally Motlana, National President of the Black Housewives League and Vice-President of the South African Council of Churches.<sup>78</sup> Since then, over 200 black South Africans have arrived in Israel to receive training from the Institute, which has also organized workshops in South Africa.<sup>79</sup>

It was not until the end of 1986 that the Israeli government decided to undertake a thorough review of its links with South Africa. This reevaluation was not prompted, however, by considerations for its African policy but rather by the imposition of limited economic sanctions on South Africa by the EEC and the possibility that the United States Congress might cut aid to states selling arms or military technology to South Africa. Section 508 (b) of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act passed on 2 October by Congress ordered the President to prepare a report on the violation of the arms embargo on South Africa by 1 April 1987, 'with a view to terminating United

States military assistance to those countries' engaged in such transactions.<sup>80</sup>

Differences quickly emerged over what steps, if any, should be adopted against South Africa. A small group, led by Yossi Beilin, then the political director-general of the foreign ministry, called for an immediate reduction in ties. Beilin chaired a ministry team that produced a paper recommending that Israel follow the West's lead in imposing limited sanctions. Opposing this position was the majority of the cabinet, who were reluctant to alter the nature of relations with South Africa and hoped that the status quo could be maintained. Only one member, Ammon Rubinstein was supportive of the idea. Defence minister Yitzhak Rabin was particularly critical of Beilin, berating him as a bureaucrat trying to dictate government policy, and for behaving in an irresponsible manner.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, Rabin reportedly made a secret visit to South Africa to warn government leaders there that Israel would soon be forced to lower the profile of its relations.<sup>82</sup>

On 18 March 1987, as the deadline for the publication of the US report drew closer, and in an effort to head off any potential criticism in Washington, the Israeli government announced a set of measures to be adopted against South Africa. These consisted of the reduction of all cultural, tourist and sporting ties, and, more importantly, a ban on the signing of any new defence contracts and future military sales with Pretoria. At the same time, the government appointed a committee to work out a detailed list of sanctions and plan for their implementation.<sup>83</sup>

Six months later, in mid-September, the Israeli cabinet decided to impose a limited set of sanctions against South Africa. The government announced that Israeli officials would no longer be permitted to travel to South Africa and pledged that Israel would no longer serve as transit station for South African goods and that it would not use South Africa as a transit point for its goods. Other measures included an embargo on oil and steel imports from South Africa, a prohibition on the taking up of loans from South African credit sources and a ban on the purchase of Kruggerrands.<sup>84</sup> It also agreed to set up a special fund to allow black South Africans to attend training courses in Israel. These moves were followed in November by the first Israeli vote in over two decades against South Africa in the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>85</sup>

Israel maintained that the existence of diplomatic relations between the two countries did not imply support for the policies of the South African government and consistently proclaimed its opposition

to the system of apartheid. While its opponents, and even the South Africans, were eager to stress the similarities between the two societies, Israel vehemently refuted these charges.<sup>86</sup> Both proponents and critics of ties with South Africa in Israel strongly objected to the attempts to draw comparisons between Zionism and apartheid.<sup>87</sup>

Israeli leaders insisted lamely that they were obliged to maintain cordial relations with South Africa in order to safeguard the interests of the South African Jewish community. This position was underlined by Yitzhak Shamir: 'We are not going to change the character of our relations with South Africa. There is a large Jewish community in South Africa and that has to be taken into account.'<sup>88</sup> More plausible is the argument that Israel's policy toward South Africa was governed by self interest and more pragmatic concerns. Supporters of these ties argued that Israel possessed too few friends in the world to be in a position to choose its diplomatic partners and military allies. The moral issues involved were overridden by the dictates of *realpolitik* in an increasingly hostile international environment. This justification is well reflected in the comments of the former head of Israel's military intelligence, Shlomo Gazit:

Israel is in a state of war and has been for last thirty-six years. We are under tremendous pressure. We can't allow ourselves the luxury of refusing cooperation; of receiving political, economic and scientific help or support from any party that could be of assistance to us. If cooperation with South Africa helps Israel, I'm for it.<sup>89</sup>

It was a strategy born out of despair, bereft of any long-term vision, yet one which, at the same time, reflected a growing cynicism toward international opinion. Rather than serving Israel's interests, this policy only increased Israel's estrangement from the international community and reinforced its image as a pariah state.

The explanation of Israel's difficulties at the international level cannot be attributed solely to its relations with South Africa. Its isolation in the international system dates back to the early years of its statehood and predates the expansion of its ties with South Africa. The real roots of this problem are to be found at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, Israel's association with the apartheid regime, and the rapid and demonstrative manner in which it expanded the scope of its relations after 1973, proved to be a major obstacle in its search for new diplomatic partners, and in its efforts to break out of its political isolation.

The liability of Israel's cooperation with South Africa was most evident in the case of its policy of restoring diplomatic relations with the Black African states. African leaders were highly critical of Israel for its ties with South Africa and were outraged by their military cooperation. Through its collaboration with the rule of apartheid, Israel seriously undermined the depth of friendship and the level of goodwill that existed in Africa for its cause.<sup>90</sup> Many African states were unwilling to consider relations with Israel because of this issue, and made the improvement in relations conditional on its willingness to end its links with South Africa. Israel, however, was not prepared to alter substantially its relations with South Africa in order to further its political position in Africa. It was unwilling to forego the material benefits accruing from this relationship for the problematic reward of future diplomatic and political support from the African states.<sup>91</sup>

African hostility toward Israel, because of its cooperation with South Africa, emerged as a major constraint in Israel's efforts to redevelop ties on the continent. This issue was at the forefront of the debate in Africa over the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations. It became an important and, in some cases, the overriding explanation as to why the majority of the African states decided maintain their political boycott of Israel.

#### Notes

1. See among others *Israel-South Africa: Cooperation of Imperialistic Outposts* (1976); Samih Farsoun, 'Settler Colonialism and Herrenvolk Democracy' in Richard P. Stevens and Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*; Ali Mazrui, 'Zionism and Apartheid: Strange Bedfellows or Natural Allies?', *Alternatives: A Journal of World Policy*, 9, 1983, pp. 73-97 and Benjamin Beit Hallahmi, *The Israeli Connection: Who Israel Arms and Why* (1987).
2. See for example Michael Curtis, 'Africa, Israel and the Middle East', *Middle East Review*, Summer, 1985, pp. 5-22 and J. Leo Cefkin, 'Israel and South Africa: Reconciling Pragmatism and Principle', *Middle East Review*, Winter, 1988/89, pp. 29-40. For a comprehensive review of Israeli positions toward relations with South Africa see Naomi Chazan, 'Israeli Perspectives on the Israel-South Africa Relationship' *Research Report*, 9 and 10, December, 1987. The phrase comes from Chazan.
3. Quoted in *Israel versus Apartheid* (1985), p. 10.

4. See Richard P. Stevens, 'Zionism, South Africa and Apartheid: The Paradoxical Triangle' in Richard P. Stevens and Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa* (1980), p. 53.
5. 'An Inspiration to Men Everywhere: How the South African Press Reacted', *Jewish Affairs*, June, 1967, pp. 12-17.
6. See 'Report on the Relations between Israel and South Africa' in Stevens and Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*, p. 197.
7. *Daily Telegraph*, 31 October, 1973.
8. *Ha'aretz*, 14 November, 1973.
9. *Ha'aretz*, 7 December, 1973.
10. For a coverage of Vorster's visit see Benjamin Pogrund, 'Israel's South African Ties', *Jerusalem Post* 20 April, 1976; *New York Times*, 18 April, 1976. For criticism of the visit in Israel see David Shaham, 'Both Wrong and Stupid', *New Outlook*, 19, 6, September/October, 1976.
11. *South Africa Digest*, 16 April, 1976.
12. *Africa Research Bulletin*, April, 1976, p. 4009.
13. *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 14 April, 1976.
14. For details of Ehrlich's visit see *Africa Confidential*, 4 August, 1978. For Horwood's visit, *The Economist*, 20 December, 1980.
15. *Financial Mail* (Johannesburg), 14 September, 1979.
16. *Africa Report*, 24, March-April, 1979, p. 34.
17. Curtis, 'Africa, Israel and the Middle East', pp. 10-11.
18. See James Adams *The Unnatural Alliance* (1984), p. 19; Jane Hunter, 'Israel: South Africa's answer to sanctions?', *Middle East International*, 11 July, 1986 and Alfred T. Moleah, 'Israel/South Africa: The Special Relationship', *Africa Report*, November-December, 1980, p. 16.
19. *South Africa Digest*, 9 January, 1981.
20. *Africa Report*, 23, March-April, 1978, p. 37.
21. Hunter, 'Israel: South Africa's answer to sanctions?'.
22. Several Israeli firms have advertized in the South African press offering advice on how to bypass restrictions on South African trade. This practise was referred in the Report of the Advisory Committee on South Africa presented to U.S. Secretary of State, George Shultz in January 1987. See Chazan, 'Israeli Perspectives on the Israel-South Africa Relationship', p. 11.
23. Interviews conducted in Israel in June 1983. Officials in the Israeli foreign ministry were extremely reluctant to discuss relations with South Africa. Likewise diplomats at the South African embassy in Tel Aviv were not prepared to discuss any aspect of relations with Israel.

24. The most useful book on Israel's military ties with South Africa is Adams *The Unnatural Alliance*. Unfortunately much of the information contained in this book is not referenced and Adams repeats uncritically many of the rumours of cooperation in this area.
25. *Washington Post*, 22 February, 1987; Jane Hunter, 'Israel and South Africa: Comrades in Arms', *Middle East International*, 25 July, 1986.
26. Hunter, 'Israel and South Africa: Comrades in Arms'.
27. *Daily Telegraph*, 31 October, 1973.
28. *South Africa Digest*, 15 September, 1974.
29. *Washington Post*, 8 July, 1975.
30. *The Star* (Johannesburg), 17 April, 1976.
31. See Naomi Chazan, 'The Fallacies of Pragmatism: Israeli Foreign Policy towards South Africa', *African Affairs*, 82, 327, April, 1983, p. 186.
32. Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, p. 122. In addition, there have been persistent claims that Israel has sold the Kfir jet to South Africa. However, as yet, there have been no verified delivery of the plane. For one of the first reports to this effect see *New York Times*, 8 August, 1976. See also Osia, *Israel, South Africa and Black Africa* (1981), p. 30 and *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, February, 1985.
33. *The Economist*, 5 November, 1977.
34. Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, p. 111.
35. *The Economist*, 5 November, 1977.
36. *The Times*, 3 June, 1983. It is not certain as to whether this drone was sold by Israel to South Africa or manufactured in South Africa itself under license.
37. Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, pp. 117-20; Hunter, 'Israel and South Africa: Comrades in Arms', and *Ha'aretz*, 29 April, 1983 quoting foreign sources. In September 1987 Israel decided to cancel the Lavi project on account of financial difficulties. Since then the South African government as tried to recruit many of the personnel laid off after the cancellation of the project. See *Jerusalem Post*, 9 November, 1987.
38. Hunter, 'Israel and South Africa: Comrades in Arms.' and *Ma'ariv*, 26 July, 1988.
39. Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, pp. 123-24.
40. *Jerusalem Post*, 21 June, 1989 and *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, July, 1989.

41. Chazan, 'Israeli Perspectives on the Israeli South African Relationship', p. 14.
42. *Sunday Times* 15 April, 1984.
43. See 'Report on the Relations between Israel and South Africa' in Stevens and Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*, p. 202 and Hunter 'Israel and South Africa: Comrades in Arms'.
44. *New York Times*, 14 December, 1981.
45. See Abdelwahab Elmessiri, 'Israel and South Africa: A Link Matures', in Stevens and Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*, p. 68.
46. Quoted in Zdenek Cervenka and Barbara Rogers, *The Nuclear Axis* (1978), p. 325.
47. For coverage of the various interpretations see Robert Manning and Stephen Talbot, 'American Cover-up on Israeli Bomb', *Middle East*, 68, June, 1980, pp. 8-12 and Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, pp. 187-96.
48. See Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, p. 195.
49. For a review of the way this issue is presented see Gerald M. Steinberg, 'The Mythology of Israeli South African Cooperation', *Middle East Review*, Spring, 1987, pp. 31-38.
50. See *United Nations Document*, A/35/402. 9 September, 1980.
51. See among many others: *Washington Post*, 16 September, 1980; Moleah, 'Israel/South Africa', p. 17; 'Israel enters Africa by way of Egypt-and Danger Lurks', *New African*, June, 1982, p. 51; 8 Days, 28 February, 1981; *Newsweek*, 22 June, 1981 and *Middle East International*, 25 July, 1986.
52. The most prominent of these was Shabtai Kalmonovitch who acted on behalf of Bophuthatswana. Kalmanovitch was arrested at the end of 1987 and convicted for spying on behalf of the Soviet Union. See *Ha'aretz*, 15 January, 1988.
53. 'Twinning with a Tyrant', *Jerusalem Post*, 9 November, 1984.
54. See Alan George, 'Israel, Ciskei and Black Africa', *Middle East International*, 24 August, 1984, pp. 15-16.
55. See *Ibid.*, p. 16 and *Davar* (Hebrew), 19 August, 1984.
56. *Koteret Rashit* (Hebrew), 16 July, 1986.
57. *Financial Mail*, 11 May, 1984
58. *Sunday Times*, 4 December, 1983.
59. *Jerusalem Post*, 20 June, 1984.
60. *Jerusalem Post*, 8 April, 1985. Twelve of the fifteen Israelis invited decided not to attend the ceremony.
61. *OAU Document*, ECM/Res. 20 (VIII). Addis Ababa, November, 1973.

62. *Africa Research Bulletin*, April, 1976, p. 4009.
63. Ibid.
64. *United Nations Document*, A/38/311, 25 July, 1983. The conference on the 'Alliance between South Africa and Israel' was sponsored by the United Nations Centre against Apartheid.
65. See for example *OAU Document*, On the Palestine Question, CM/Res. 787 (XXXV). Freetown, March, 1980. This phrasing is the standard reference to Israeli-South African ties in all the OAU resolutions on both the Middle East and the Palestine Question.
66. Ibid.
67. See *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 108 (XIX). Addis Ababa, June, 1983 and *OAU Document*, AHG/Res. 122 (XX). Addis Ababa, November, 1984.
68. *Africa Now*, 19 November, 1982, p. 58.
69. Bolaji Akinyemi, 'Open letter to Members of the National Assembly on Nigeria-Israel Relations', *Nigerian Forum*, July/August/September, 1982, pp. 731-39. Akinyemi letter was in response to a motion by 106 members of the National Assembly calling on Nigeria to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. For an excellent critique of Nigeria's position see: Jimni Adisa, 'Nigeria, Israel and Diplomatic Ties: The Conditional Thesis', *International Problems*, 24, 1-4, 1985, pp. 60-89.
70. *Ha'aretz*, 14 February, 1985.
71. 'South Africa and Israel', Information Department, Embassy of Israel, London. See also *Ma'ariv*, 24 August, 1983.
72. *Jerusalem Post*, 7 August, 1985.
73. *Jerusalem Post*, 12 August, 1985.
74. *Jerusalem Post*, 22 October, 1985.
75. See Shlomo Avineri, 'A Timely Delay', *Jerusalem Post*, 12 November, 1985.
76. For details of Buthelezi visit see *Jerusalem Post*, 15 and 23 August, 1985.
77. *Ha'aretz*, 9 January, 1986 and *Jerusalem Post*, 21 January, 1986.
78. For details of this project and the Center for Foreign Policy Options see 'Centre Forward', *Jerusalem Post* 18 April, 1986 and *International Herald Tribune*, 31 March, 1986.
79. *Jerusalem Post*, 4 November, 1987.
80. United States, Congress, *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act Of 1986*, Public Law 99-440-Oct.2, 1986.

81. See *Jerusalem Post*, 28 January, 1987; *Ha'aretz*, 30 January, 1987 and *New York Times*, 29 January, 1987. For an excellent and comprehensive discussion on the sanctions debate in Israel see Chazan, Israeli 'Perspectives on the Israel-South Africa Relationship', pp. 1-45.
82. *Ha'aretz*, 26 January, 1987 quoting *Newsweek*.
83. *Jerusalem Post*, 19 March, 1987.
84. *Jerusalem Post*, 17 September, 1987 and FBIS/MEA, *Daily Report*, 17 September, 1987, p. 22.
85. *Ha'aretz*, 23 November, 1987.
86. For examples of South African attempts to draw parallels in the situation of the two countries see 'An Inspiration to Men Everywhere' *Jewish Affairs*, June, 1967 and *Die Burger*, 29 May, 1968 quoted in Stevens and Elmessiri, *Israel and South Africa*, pp. 113-20 and p. 196.
87. See Shlomo Avineri, 'Speaking out on Apartheid', *Jerusalem Post*, 2 August, 1985; Katya Gibel Azoulay, 'Stigma of Implicit Support', *Jerusalem Post*, 8 April, 1986 and Chazan, 'Fallacies of Pragmatism', p. 196.
88. *Jerusalem Post*, 29 September, 1985. For an effective demolishing of this argument and critique of Israel's interests in South Africa see Chazan, 'The Fallacies of Pragmatism', pp. 169-99.
89. Interview with Gazit in *Financial Mail*, 17 June, 1983.
90. This impression was conveyed in a series of interviews conducted with officials at the OAU and the embassies of Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia in Addis Ababa, July 1984. Without exception this issue was mentioned by all the officials who were interviewed. Many stated that the renewal of relations with Israel would not be possible until it changed its policies toward South Africa.
91. Many of the officials in Israel's Foreign Ministry were sceptical as to whether reducing the level of relations with South Africa would further the chances of renewing relations in Africa. There were also calls in Israel that the resumption of relations with the African states should not be at the expense of its ties with South Africa. See, for example, 'Price of Legitimacy', *Newsview*, 31 January, 1984 and *Ha'aretz*, 27 August, 1986.

## Conclusion

The resumption of diplomatic relations with African states emerged during the 1980s as an important foreign policy goal for Israel. Considerable time, effort and resources were devoted toward reestablishing its one-time, widespread and successful relations on the continent. The severance of diplomatic relations by nearly all the African states during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 led to an angry backlash in Israel. The Israelis were embittered by the African desertion of their cause, especially at a time of national crisis. This feeling of rejection and betrayal was well summed up by *Ha'aretz*. 'We shall not forget who abandoned us', it asserted, 'it is unlikely that the restoration of our position in Africa will be high on our list of priorities for the near future'.<sup>1</sup>

The comment proved to be accurate. In the years immediately after the war, Israel displayed little interest in Africa. No serious attempt was made to exploit the tensions in Afro-Arab relations in order to reestablish its position on the continent. Ya'acov Shimoni, the assistant director-general for Asian and African affairs in the Israeli foreign ministry at the time of the break, outlined the approach which Israel was likely to adopt in the future.

In the case of the resumption of relations, aid could also be resumed. I would imagine it would be at a somewhat lower level of enthusiasm, a little more cautiously and a little more circumspectly. Resumed diplomatic relations need also not mean resident Israeli embassies all around Africa. As we are not a Big Power, we may be a little more modest, a little more careful.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in spite of this major, and traumatic, diplomatic setback within less than a decade of the Yom Kippur War the development of relations with Africa had resumed a prominent place on the foreign policy agenda of Israel. Once again, Israel, displaying little caution, was enthusiastically courting the friendship of the African states.

What accounts for this renewed interest on the part of Israel and the importance it has attached to maintaining a strong and extensive set of relations with Africa? Israel's principal motive for restoring diplomatic relations in Africa arises out its continuous search for legitimacy and acceptance by the international community. As in the 1960s, Israel's revived quest for diplomatic partners was driven by the necessity to break out of its political and diplomatic isolation. This



political motive was stated clearly by Yitzhak Shamir during his visit to West Africa. 'One more state and then another state ... it's contagious. It reduces our isolation and gives votes in the UN.'<sup>3</sup> Any strategic or economic benefits that Israel might receive following the resumption of relations have been of secondary importance to this overriding objective. The concern for normalizing its international position was also stressed by David Kimche, who, as director-general of the Israeli foreign ministry from 1981-86, was the architect of Israel's African policy. 'We have seen African countries break off diplomatic relations when we were in difficulties', he acknowledged when challenged on the reason for pursuing ties in Africa.

On the other hand, we have to operate according to Israeli interests in this matter, and it is certainly an Israeli interest not to be barred from the Third World, not to be transformed into Taiwan or a South Africa: and it is certainly an Israeli interest to have economic interests in Third World countries; it is very very important for us.<sup>4</sup>

While the desire to regain the friendship and the political support of the African states has been the dominant factor, it is not sufficient, by itself, to explain the attention the search for diplomatic partners received in Israel and the high profile given to the development of relations on the continent. The reception accorded to Presidents Doe and Mobutu during their respective visits to Jerusalem outweighed by far the political importance of Zaire and Liberia to Israel. Reciprocally, the size of the delegations and the level of the publicity surrounding the visits of Israeli leaders to Africa during the past decade far exceeded Israel's objective interests, and the significance of its presence in Africa.

The nature of its relations with Africa has become a symbol for Israel, the barometer of its fortunes and standing in the international community. Its widespread ties in Africa during the 1960s are remembered with nostalgia, as a time when Israel possessed a positive image and was openly accepted as a member of the international community. In turn, the severance of diplomatic relations during the Yom Kippur War heightened Israel's feeling of isolation. Its African setback has been regarded as the trigger of its international difficulties which culminated in the 'Zionism is Racism' resolution at the United Nations in November 1975. Accordingly, the renewal of relations with Africa was portrayed as a return to the 'good old days' and has been heralded as a sign of its reacceptance by the international

community. The warmth of the welcome given to Israel's leaders by the African states has served as a reminder of the former 'golden era' of its international diplomacy.<sup>5</sup> Without reference to this symbolic factor, the importance and the high profile accorded to the Israel's African policy in the 1980s cannot be fully understood.

While Israel was anxious to persuade the African states to renew relations, doubts and criticisms were voiced over the means employed to regain diplomatic recognition. Specifically, this criticism was directed at the military component of the ties developed. Although the military dimension of Israeli African relations has always been evident, it came to the forefront in Israel's search for diplomatic partners. Military assistance, training and the sale of arms were utilised to promote its political interests in Africa. The offer of military cooperation was regarded in Israel as the most effective means available for furthering its goals in Africa.

After the pacts were signed with Zaire, questions were raised in Israel as to the costs of being so closely associated with Zaire and Mobutu's regime. In an editorial *Ma'ariv* gave strong expression to these doubts. 'Is it really the place of Israel,' it asked, 'to provide this huge and weak country with advice, planning and means with which to defend herself?' It continued:

Do we have to give military advice, know-how and defence plans to a country not particularly friendly with us and which is hardly an example of democracy and moral values? Before we become the traders of defence needs to all and sundry we must ask ourselves if this is in our true interests, if we are strong enough to cope with it and whether we should not be more choosy in our choice of military partners.<sup>6</sup>

Again, after President Doe's visit to Jerusalem *Ha'aretz* cautioned the government not to commit itself beyond Israel's means in its enthusiasm to break back into Africa. While recognizing the importance for Israel to restore its relations in Africa, it warned that the problems of the African leaders surpassed Israel's capabilities. It called for relations to be placed on a more realistic footing and to be conducted with more circumspection.

We do not see the reason for such declarations as 'Israel identifies with Liberia's struggle against imperialism' ... we neither have the available funds nor the desire to see Israeli officers intervening

under the guise of technical assistance in the fratricidal struggles 'going on in Black African countries'.<sup>7</sup>

Concern was also voiced over the the training of the bodyguards and the security services of African leaders and Israel's willingness to present their cause in the United States. 'Unimplementable promises [must not] be made', the *Jerusalem Post* warned, 'that this country would see to it that U.S. Jews desisted from attacking Zaire for its sorry human-rights record.'<sup>8</sup>

As in the 1960s the issue of military assistance served only to foster a negative image of Israel's presence in Africa and resulted in charges of intervention in the internal affairs of African states. For instance, in April 1983 Jerry Rawlings accused Israel, together with the United States, of plotting to overthrow his regime in Ghana.<sup>9</sup> An article published in Kenya went as far as to claim that Israel might lend a hand in any plot to oust the Kenyan government if their interests were threatened by the existing government.<sup>10</sup> A report from Nigeria even referred to a planned military takeover by Israel in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> Israel's close identification with Presidents Doe and Mobutu, as well as other African leaders, also led to charges of it being responsible for sustaining their repressive and corrupt personal rule. In particular, Israel was accused of intervening on the behalf of Doe in helping him to suppress an abortive coup d'état in November 1985.<sup>12</sup>

While many of the discussions with African leaders concentrated on future military cooperation, the Africans have also been interested in the resumption of Israel's technical assistance programmes and the return of Israel's agricultural experts. Calls in Africa for the resumption of relations frequently referred to the benefits that would be received from Israel, especially in the field of agricultural cooperation. The achievements of Israel's aid projects, and their contribution to African development, have not been forgotten. Israeli assistance is avidly sought after by states throughout the continent, despite the absence of diplomatic ties and regardless of differences in political outlook. The funds for embarking on large-scale aid projects in Africa were, however, no longer readily available. Israel's mounting economic problems resulted in large cuts to the budget of the Mashav. An extra half a million dollars had to be found to finance the aid package for Zaire; and those programmes encountered financial difficulties. Officials from the Central African Republic, for example, left Israel in August 1983 extremely disappointed after hearing the level of aid that they would be likely to receive in return for the restoring of ties. Israel was not in a position to offer large-scale aid

and training programmes as a means of persuading the Africans to renew relations.

The African states, for their part, have been disillusioned by the failure of the Arabs to keep their promises of aid and investment and have lost confidence in the Arabs to help them economically. In particular, they have been angered at the way in which they alone have been singled out and punished by the Arabs for maintaining relations with Israel. *Le Soleil*, for example, condemned the withdrawal of Arab aid as 'an error with incalculable consequences for the already slightly clouded Arab-African relations' and suggested that this would be viewed as intimidation which was turning Afro-Arab cooperation into a vulgar matter of money.<sup>13</sup>

Some African leaders have also been worried by the interference by some Arab states, and specifically Libya, in their internal affairs. Furthermore, they have been disappointed at the lack of interest displayed by the Arabs to the problems facing the continent and have resented the way in which they have been drawn into inter-Arab disputes. The split in the Arab world over the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and the refusal of the Africans to exclude Egypt effectively suspended Afro-Arab multilateral cooperation. As a result, the second Afro-Arab summit, scheduled for 1980, has yet to meet. In addition, the disputes over Chad and the Western Sahara which disrupted the workings of the OAU in the 1980s were seen primarily as a result of Arab differences. Sékou Touré's remarks, shortly before his death in 1984, reflect the African disenchantment with the Arabs:

It is true that some African states have changed their policy toward relations with Israel, and they had reason to do so. The fact is that the attitude of the Arab League has not encouraged those states to refrain from having relations with Israel.<sup>14</sup>

African leaders have seen Israel as a valuable contact point with the West and as an influential, if not indispensable, intermediary with the United States. Many Africans believe that developing closer links with Israel will facilitate their efforts in attracting greater aid and investment from the United States. In Sierra Leone, a member of parliament, Leonard Fafona, called on the government to seriously consider resuming relations with Israel. 'Our continued refusal', he declared, 'is isolating us from the benefits which we should normally get from a superpower which is so close to Israel'.<sup>15</sup> Israel, for its part, has displayed a willingness to play this role. It was even willing to reinforce the perception of its ability to alter attitudes in Washington

by assuring African leaders that it would assist them in improving their image and use its influence in Washington on their behalf. In response to a question as to whether Israel would lobby for Liberia in the United States, Yitzhak Shamir replied: 'Liberia knows Israel has good contacts and thinks, perhaps rightly, that those contacts will help Liberia'.<sup>16</sup>

By entering into a dialogue with Israel, African leaders have been simultaneously playing three hands with the same card. First, they have been seeing what benefits they might actually derive from Israel in return for restoring relations. The Africans are eager for the return of Israel's agricultural programmes while Israeli military expertise is highly prized. Secondly, they have been hoping to create a more positive image in the West and, in particular, to attract American support. Finally they have been raising the stakes of Afro-Arab solidarity. By showing an interest in developing relations with Israel, the Africans have been signalling to the Arabs that their support can no longer be taken for granted and that the choice between Israel and the Arab world no longer remains a mutually exclusive option for them.

The reevaluation of diplomatic relations with Israel is still continuing in Africa. States throughout the continent, regardless of their political and ideological outlook, have openly shown an interest in developing contacts with Jerusalem. In November 1987, President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique spoke publicly of a possible 'accommodation' with Israel and discussions have been held between Israeli and Mozambican officials over potential Israeli aid projects in Mozambique and future relations between the two countries.<sup>17</sup> In January 1989 the *Times of Zambia* reported that President Kaunda had met in Lusaka with David Kimche to discuss future cooperation and the possibility of the renewal of relations between the two countries.<sup>18</sup> A further surprising development was the visit of deputy foreign minister Benyamin Netanyahu to Uganda in March 1989.<sup>19</sup>

Israel's African policy received another boost at the end of the decade when Ethiopia, sixteen years after it had broken off ties, announced that it too was restoring diplomatic relations. The resumption of ties by Ethiopia, the first African state clearly not identified with the West to take this step, was heralded in Jerusalem as a further consolidation of its presence on the continent. The news was also greeted with jubilation by Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community which anticipated that the remaining Ethiopian Jews would now be permitted to leave Ethiopia for Israel. These hopes were boosted by Kessa Kebade, a close aide to Ethiopia's leader Mengistu

Haile Mariam, who acknowledged that the Ethiopian government would be prepared to allow Ethiopian Jews to emigrate to Israel.<sup>20</sup>

Ethiopia's decision to restore relations took few observers by surprise. Contacts between Jerusalem and Addis Ababa, albeit quietly, had been taking place for the previous couple of years. In 1988, thirty-three Ethiopian trainees had participated on a variety of courses in Israel and, at the end of the year, the Ethiopian minister of agriculture had paid a secret visit to Jerusalem to discuss the expansion of Israeli assistance to his country.<sup>21</sup> Expectation of an official rapprochement between the two countries increased during 1989 following overtures by the Ethiopian government to the United States to upgrade the level of its diplomatic representation in Washington and a meeting in September between Israel's foreign minister Moshe Arens and his Ethiopian counterpart at the United Nations.

Ethiopia's reasoning for reestablishing ties with Israel followed the, by now, well established pattern set by other African states. Officially, it announced that the 'compelling reasons which dictated Ethiopia's severance of diplomatic relations no longer existed'. Kessa Kebade was more honest as to the true reasons behind his government's decision. Kebade admitted, at a press conference in Jerusalem, that the resumption of relations was related to Ethiopia's hopes of improving its ties and image in the United States. Noting Israel's strong and close connections with the Jewish lobby in Washington, Kebade added, 'we see possibilities in this'.<sup>22</sup> Reports also began to immediately circulate that the restoration of political relations was directly linked to the resumption of military assistance by Israel to Mengistu's beleaguered regime.<sup>23</sup>

Israel's African policy during the 1980s was to escape from the diplomatic stranglehold of the Arabs and reestablish a political presence in Africa. Israel's original hopes of a mass resumption of relations were not matched by its diplomatic achievements. It had, nonetheless, succeeded by the end of the decade in ending its diplomatic isolation on the continent. Whilst the majority of states have, so far, chosen not to restore ties, the lack of any real hostility by African leaders toward those states which have taken this step indicates that diplomatic relations with Israel is once again acceptable to the African polity.

Israel's expectation was that once one or two states renewed relations the rest would quickly follow, mirroring the way relations were originally severed in 1973, failed to materialize. Whereas the break in diplomatic relations was a response to regional and external pressures, the reassessment and the restoration of those relations

has been dictated primarily by domestic concerns and considerations. The importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem, of maintaining close contacts with the Arab world and the significance of Israel's links with South Africa vary throughout the continent. The economic needs, domestic priorities and the problems of security facing African leaders differ from one country to another. The constant speculation and pronouncements over the possibility of a mass resumption of relations ignored the importance of the relative weight of these factors. It is in respect to these internal demands rather than regional and continental concerns that the dilemma facing African leaders over the question of restoring relations has been answered. Many states have yet to decide as to whether the benefits to be gained from restoring relations would outweigh the likely costs involved and furthermore, whether such benefits would prove to be greater than those derived from the ongoing informal links already developed. Until that equation has been solved, Israeli African relations are likely to remain in their current fluid state.

During the 1980s Israel utilized all means available to persuade the African states to end their diplomatic boycott. The search for diplomatic partners was pursued at the cost of all other considerations. In particular Israel was prepared to reward African leaders for renewing relations by training of their security forces and personal bodyguards, and by promising to lobby on their behalf in the United States. While this strategy was successful in accomplishing the immediate short-term goal of ending Africa's diplomatic boycott, it cannot serve as the foundation upon which stable relations are built. Having emerged from its diplomatic isolation, Israel's leaders now need to reassess the nature and quality of its relations in Africa, to define its true interests and to decide how it can best develop long-term, mutually beneficial relations with African states. That is the challenge of its African policy for the 1990s.

#### Notes

1. *Ha'aretz* (Hebrew), 2 November, 1973.
2. Ya'acov Shimoni, 'Israel, the Arabs and Africa', *Africa Report*, 21, July-August, 1976, p. 54
3. *Jerusalem Post*, 18 June, 1987.
4. Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Middle East and Africa (FBIS/MEA), *Daily Report*, 15 July, 1985, p. I6.
5. Articles in the Israeli media on Israeli African are replete with personal and emotional references. See for example: 'Back to

- Africa', *Newsview*, 1 June, 1982, pp. 12-13; *Jerusalem Post*, 23 June, 1987 and 28 August, 1989 and *Ha'aretz*, 18 January, 1989.
6. *Ma'ariv*, 18 January, 1983.
7. *Ha'aretz*, 24 August, 1983. For further criticism in Israel on the military aspect of Israeli African relations see 'Price of Legitimacy', *Newsview*, 31 January, 1984, p. 11; *Ha'aretz*, 3 February, 1984, *Ma'ariv*, 30 June, 1987 and 'The Use and Misuse of Military Aid to Africa', *Jerusalem Post International*, 4 July, 1987.
8. *Jerusalem Post*, 23 June, 1987.
9. Reported in *Ha'aretz*, 19 April, 1983.
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# Index

- Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, 101
- Addis Ababa, 1
- Adetoro, Chief J.E., 98
- Afro-Arab Summit, 101
- Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies, 6
- Ahidjo, Amhadou, 135
- Ajasin, Chief Michael, 98
- Akintola, Premier, 16
- Akinyemi, Professor Bolaji, 132, 165
- Alda (trading company), 69
- Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, 56
- Alhaji Ado Bayero, Emir of Kano, 132-3
- All-African People's Conference, 23
- Allon, Yigal, 80
- Amin, Idi, 7, 10, 36, 73, 75-6, renounces friendship with Israel, 33
- Amit, Meir, 157
- Amnesty International, 138
- Angola, opposition to Camp David Accords, 86
- Ankrah, General, 8
- Anya Nya, 9
- Arab aid to Africa, 80-1, 100-04
- Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA), 100-01, 103, 125-6
- Arab League, 2, 21, 22, 100, 124, 125, 163
- Arens, Moshe, 130
- Aridor, Yoram, 162
- Arikpo, Okoi, 74
- Arnon, Michael, 8
- Asaju, Michael, 98
- Asamoah, Dr. Obed, 140
- Audu, Professor Ishayu, 97
- Avineri, Shlomo, 152
- Avriel, Ehud, 2, 16, 107
- Awolowo, Obafemi, 132
- Ayari, Chedli, 126
- Azikiwi, Nnamdi, 132
- Babangida, President Ibrahim, 138, 165
- Baltazar, Rui, 102
- Bandung Conference, 1, 12
- Banguin, Sylvain, 131
- Begin, Menachem, 86, 121, 152
- Ben Gurion (David), 14-15
- Benin, Opposition to Camp David Accords, 86
- Biya, President Paul, 134-5
- Black Star Line, 22
- Blumenthal, Naftali, 95
- Bokassa, (Colonel) President, 7, 36
- Bophuthatswana, 161
- Botha, Pik, 166
- Botha, President P.W., 150
- Botha, R.F., 152-3
- Botswana, 37
- Boumedienne, President, 34-5, 43, 46, 52
- Buhari, President Mohammadu, 165
- Burma, 3
- Burundi, 5, 46 break with Israel, 35, 37
- Buthelezi, Chief Gatsha, 167
- Cafoya, Valentine, 98
- Camp David Accords, 85-93 effect of Israeli-African relations, 86 and Arab world, 87 and the OAU, 87-90 denounced by Non-Aligned Movement, 90-2 and re-establishment of Israel-African relations, 97-100 and Palestinian aspirations, 105
- CAR see Central African Republic
- Carter, President, 160
- Cameroon, 4, 7, 37, 47 and resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel, 14-6, 134-6, 139, 140
- Casablanca Declaration, 24-5
- Central African Republic, 3, 5, 7, 11, 37 restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 139, 140
- Centre for International Co-operation, 6
- Ciskei, 161, 162-3
- Chad, 3, 5, 7, 37, 48 resists Arab pressure, 22 breaks with Israel, 33, 35, 37, 45, 47 restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 115
- Chatti, Habib, 125
- Cheysson, Claude, 117
- Chissano, Joaquim, 182
- Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, 45
- Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) resists Arab pressure, 23 breaks with Israel, 33, 37, 52 opposes Camp David Accords, 86
- Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), 167
- Czechanower, Yosef, 107
- Dacko, David, 16, 17, 114-5
- Dahomey, 3, 5, 7, 37, 50

- Dayan Moshe, 71, 99, 106, 113, 157  
 De Beers, 154  
 Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, 77  
 Declaration and Programme for Action for Afro-Arab Co-operation (Cairo Declaration), 101-02  
 Dennis, Samuel, 99  
 D'Estaing, Giscard, 120  
 Dikko, Umaru, 132-3  
 Doe, President Samuel, 127, 128-9, 130-1, 134, 135, 136-7, 178, 179, 180  
 Eastman, T. Ernest, 127  
 Eban, Abba, 10, 33, 63  
 Egypt, 7  
   at Casablanca Conference, 24-5  
   and OAU, 25-6  
   defeated in Six Day War, 26-7  
   closes Straits of Tiran, 26  
   and Jarring Mission, 26-7, 32  
   and see Camp David Accords  
   and see Sadat, President Anwar  
 Ehrlich, Simcha, 153, 155  
 Eitan, Rafael, 159  
 Ekaganaki, Nzo, 36  
 Entebbe  
   rescue of hostages at, 71-2, 73  
 Equatorial Guinea, 37  
 Eritrea, 8  
 Eritrean Liberation Front, 45  
 Eteki, William, 135  
 Ethiopia, 1, 2, 6, 8-9, 37, 48  
   and Arab pressure, 45-6  
   Solidarity with Egypt, 50  
   breaks diplomatic relations with Israel, 55  
   and Israeli military aid, 71  
   restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 140, 182-3  
 Eyadems, President Gnassigbe, 51, 130-1, 136  
 Facine Touri, 131  
 Fafona, Leonard, 181  
 Fafowora, O.O., 164  
 Fahnbulleh, H. Boimah, 127  
 Faisal, King, 45  
 First All-Asian Conference, *see* Bandung Conference  
 First Conference of Independant African States, 23  
 France, support for Israel, 117  
 Gabon, 3, 5, 7, 11, 37  
 Gadna Organisation, 6  
 Gambari, Ibrahim, 132, 165  
 Gambia, 3, 5, 37, 47  
 Gandhi (Indira), 35  
 Gazit, Shlomo, 168  
 Genzer, Aryeh, 115  
 Ghali, Butros, 88, 106  
 Ghana, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 24, 37  
   and Israeli commercial and industrial links, 10-11  
   condemned by Arab League, 22  
   supports Israel, 25  
   solitarly with Egypt, 50  
   and restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel, 98  
 Golan Law, 116  
 Goukouni, Oueddei, 128  
 Gowan, General, 30, 35, 56  
 Guinea, 2, 24, 37, 46, 47  
   and resumption of relations with Israel, 131-2  
 Gur Construction, 162  
 Habre, Hissen, 127  
 Hadass, Yossef, 139  
 Haile Selassie, Emperor, 8, 34, 46, 50, 55  
 Haim, Ephraim Ben, 115  
 Harriman, Leslie, 86  
 Hasley, (J.W.K.), 8  
 Hebrew University Medical School, 6  
 Herz, Israel, 79, 98  
 Herzog, President Chaim, 129, 130, 138, 150, 166  
 Hillel, Shlomo, 127  
 Hirohito, Emperor, 138  
 Histadrut (Corporation), 69, 79, 98, 155, 166, 167  
 Histadrut Workers College, 6  
 Hod, General Mordechai, 157  
 Horer, Amos, 160  
 Horin, Eliashiv Ben, 114  
 Horwood, Owen, 153, 155  
 Houphouet-Boigny, President, 24, 27, 28, 36-7, 55, 80, 86, 107, 114, 133  
 Iraqi Fund for External Development, 101  
 Ironsi, General, 8  
 Iskoor (Company), 155  
 Islamic Conference Organization, 125, 135  
 Islamic Development Bank, 135  
 Islamic Solidarity, 47-9  
 Israel  
   and Bandung Conference, 1  
   first embassy in Accra, 1  
   in Addis Ababa, 1  
   Ethiopia, recognition by 1  
   diplomatic recognition in Africa, 1-3  
 Israel (continued)  
   and claim to Jerusalem, 2  
   African visits to, 3  
   aid and co-operation programme, 3-6  
   Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 4  
   Division for International Co-operation (the Mashav), 4  
   and training, 6  
   military assistance, 6-7  
   and African military leaders, 7-9  
   and Horn of Africa, 8  
   and Turkey, 9  
   and Iran, 9  
   and Anya Nya, 9  
   and secessionist movemants, 10  
   economic and commercial sphere, 10  
   trade with Africa, 11  
   honeymoon with Africa, 13-15  
   appeal of Israel to Africa, 15-17  
   support from African States in U.N., 23  
   and Casablanca Declaration, 24-5  
   and Organisation of African Unity (OAU), 25-6  
   Six-Day War, 26-32, 39, 49, 53, 56, 149, 157  
   African states break with Israel, 33-7, 45  
   Yom Kippur War, 35-9, 45, 47-8, 49-50, 51, 52-3, 56-7, 64, 71, 80  
   break with African states, 36-9, 43-63, 100  
   and South Africa, 43, 52-4, 105-06, 147  
   and apartheid, 52  
   trade, 54  
   as fellow pariah state, 147

- denounces apartheid, 148, 150  
 and Six Day War, 149  
 commercial and financial ties, 149-50, 151, 153-5, 165-6  
 effect of Yom Kippur War, 150  
 effect of mass severing of diplomatic relations, 150-1  
 diplomatic ties, 151-2, 168-9  
 military and nuclear co-operation, 155-63  
 and nuclear weapons, 160-1  
 and Bantustan homelands, 161-3, 166  
 and Portugal, 163  
 African reaction, 163  
 and Nigera's criticism, 164-5  
 condemnation of apartheid, 166  
 links with black trade unions, 167  
 links with black South Africans, 167  
 imposes sanctions against, 167-8  
 and see Zionism in racism  
 and link with Portugal, 52  
 and link with Rhodesia, 52  
 and experts in Africa, 64-7, 95-6  
 and African students, 67  
 and trade in Africa, 67-71, 93-5  
 military and intelligence links in Africa, 71-2  
 and call for expulsion from U.N., 74  
 and Zionism as racism, 76-8  
 African regret at diplomatic breaks, 78-80  
 and Camp David Accords, 85-93  
 effect on trade, 93-5  
 effect on technical assistance, 95-7  
 and Israeli-African relations, 106-07  
 campaign for resumption of ties, 113-141  
 military exports and training, 115-16  
 interest offices, 116-17  
 restoration of diplomatic relations  
   Zaire, 117-126  
   economic and agricultural co-operation, 121-2  
   military co-operation, 122-3  
   investment, 124  
   Arab response, 124-6  
 resumes diplomatic relations, 140  
 and Liberia, 127-30, 140  
 and Guinea, 131-2  
 and Nigeria, 132-3  
 and Ivory Coast, 133-4  
 and Cameroon, 134-6, 139, 140  
 and Togo, 97, 136, 140  
 and Kenya, 97, 137-8, 140  
 and Central African Republic, 139, 140  
 resumption of diplomatic relations dates of, 140  
 and Ivory Coast, 140

- Israel (continued)  
and Ethiopia, 140,  
182-3  
invasion of Southern  
Lebanon, 126  
Israel-South Africa  
Friendship Society, 152  
and see individual  
African States  
Ivory Coast, 3, 5, 7, 37, 47  
resists Arab pressure,  
23  
and resumption of  
relations with Israel,  
97, 133-4  
restores diplomatic  
relations with Israel,  
140  
Jarring, Ambanada, 57  
Mission, 57  
Jarring, Dr. Gunnar V.,  
29, 30, 31  
Jerusalem Law, 105  
Jerusalem, position of, 105  
Jewish Anti-Defamation  
League, 118, 119  
Jonah, James, 127  
Kali, J.D., 98  
Katz-Oz, Avraham, 136  
Kaunda, President  
Kenneth, 29-30, 91, 92,  
139  
Kebade, Kessa, 182, 183  
Kenya, 5, 6, 7, 11, 37, 47-8  
supports Egypt, 50  
links with Israel, 72  
and relations with  
Israel, 137-8  
restores diplomatic  
relations with Israel,  
97, 137-8, 140  
Kenyan National Council  
of Social Services, 96  
Kenyatta, President  
Jomo, 7, 38  
Kimche, David, 107, 112,  
114, 138, 162-3, 178, 182  
Klibi, Chedli, 124  
Kolingba, General, 116,  
139  
Koor Industries, 69, 95,  
155  
Kuwait Fund for Arab  
Economic Development,  
101  
Lagu, Colonel Joseph, 9  
Lamizana, Lieutenant  
Colonel, 7-8  
Laponda Wa Botenda,  
Rear Admiral, 123  
Lesotho, 38  
Levi Eshkol, 3  
Liberia, 1, 3, 5, 37, 46  
supports Egypt, 50  
re-establishes relations  
with Israel, 99,  
127-30, 140  
Israeli aid and  
assistance, 129-31,  
136-7  
Libya,  
see Gadaffi Colonel  
Limann, President, 116  
Louw, Eric, 148-9  
Machel, President, 91  
Madagascar, (Malagassi  
Republic) 2, 3, 5, 37  
Maina, Charles, 76-7  
Malan, Daniel, 53, 148  
Malawi, 5, 7, 38  
Mali, 2  
breaks with Israel, 33,  
35, 37  
Mangong, Yoka, 117  
Mashav, 96, 114, 122, 180  
Matanzima, Chief George,  
161  
Mathabatho, Lekau, 167  
Mathews, G. Bacchus,  
99-100, 115  
Mauritania, 2, 45  
Mauritius, 38  
Mayer Brothers, 11  
Mazrui, Ali, 9, 44  
Mboya, Tom, 3  
Meir, Golda, 3, 13-14, 15,  
16, 17, 22  
Mengistu, President, 71  
Mengistu, Haile Mariam,  
182-3  
Merhav, Reuven, 137  
Meshel, Yeruham, 167  
Michael, Michael, 120  
Michel, Salle, 131  
Micombero, President, 36  
Mitterand, President  
Francois, 117, 120  
Mobutu, President, 7, 30,  
47, 54, 63, 107, 117,  
118-24, 129, 134, 135,  
136, 178, 179, 180  
breaks with Israel, 35-6  
Moi, President Daniel  
Arap, 116, 126, 137  
Moktar Ould Daddah,  
President, 30, 32  
Moloisie, Benjamin, 166  
Monrovia and Brazzaville  
group, 25  
Moshe, Arens, 183  
Motlana, Sally, 167  
Moynihan, Daniel, 78  
Mphephu, President  
Patrick, 161  
Mt. Carmel Centre, 96-7  
Mt. Carmel International  
Training Centre for  
Community Services, 6  
Mulder, Dr. Connie, 54,  
151  
Mutukwa, Mrs., 77  
Nahal Organisation, 6, 7,  
9-10  
Namibia, 149, 164  
Nasser, President, 22, 24  
National Union of Kenya  
Muslims, 48  
National Union of Miners,  
167  
Ndamna, President, 45  
Netanyahu, Benjamin, 182  
Ngimbi, Nimyaidika, 117  
Ngouabi, President, 52  
Nguesso, Sassou, 139  
Niger  
breaks with Israel, 33,  
35, 37, 45, 47, 48  
Nigeria, 2, 3, 37, 47  
resists Arab pressure,  
22

- and Golda Meir's visit,  
22, 37  
supports Egypt, 50  
Nigeria (continued)  
breaks diplomatic  
relations with Israel,  
55-6, 132-3  
criticises Israel over  
South African links,  
164-5  
Njono, Charles, 86  
Nkrumah, Kwame, 3, 25  
Non-Aligned Conference,  
35  
Non-Aligned Movement,  
45, 90-2, 116  
Numeiry, General, 9  
Nyerere, President Julius,  
15, 17, 22, 79, 99, 107,  
127  
and Palestinians, 105  
OAU African Liberation  
Committee, 150  
Oba Okunade Sijuade,  
Ooni of Ife, 133  
Obote, Milton, 10  
Onu, Peter, 93, 99  
Organisation of Arab  
Petroleum Exporting  
Countries (OPEC), 44  
Organisation of African  
Unity (OAU)  
and Arab-Israeli  
conflict, 25-6, 34-9,  
45, 51, 55-8, 72-5,  
79-80, 104-05, 116  
and Six Day War,  
27-33, 52-3  
and Gadaffi, Colonel,  
34, 45-6  
Declaration of Policy, 38  
and Yom Kippur War,  
38  
and Israeli links with  
South Africa, 54, 73,  
164  
and support for PLO,  
72-4, 104  
and call for expulsion of  
Israel from UN, 74-6  
and the Camp David  
Accords, 87-90  
and the Arab League,  
100  
denounces Zaire's  
resumption and  
relations with Israel,  
125-6  
and resumption of  
relations with Israel,  
139-40  
Osago, James, 79  
Palestine, 1, 75-6  
state of, recognition by  
African States, 141  
and see PLO  
Palestine Liberation  
Organisation (PLO),  
72-3, 136  
recognised by OAU, 74  
and recognition of  
Israel, 138  
recognised in Africa, 141  
Pan-Africanism  
and Israel, 55  
Penne, Guy, 117  
Peres, Shimon, 107,  
134-5, 166, 167  
Primor, Avi, 131, 135  
Qaddafi, Colonel, 33, 34,  
35, 45, 46, 128, 129, 138  
Rabin, Yiszhak, 73-4, 89,  
124, 134, 166, 168  
Rawlings, Flight  
Lieutenant Jerry, 116,  
180  
Resolution 242, 30, 32, 51  
Rubinstein, Ammon, 168  
Rwanda, 5, 37  
Sadat, President Anwar,  
36, 45-6, 106, 107  
visit to Jerusalem, 81,  
85  
Camp David Accords,  
85-93  
Sasson, Moshe, 126  
Saudi Arabia  
breaks with Zaire, 125  
Saudi Fund for  
Development, 101  
Sebe, President Lennox,  
162  
Second Conference of  
Independent African  
States, 24  
Security Council  
Resolution 242, 29  
Sékou Touré, President,  
127, 131, 181  
supports Egypt, 26  
breaks diplomatic  
relations with Israel,  
26, 27  
Senegal, 3, 5, 7, 37, 45, 46,  
47, 48-9  
solidarity with Egypt, 50  
and Israel, 133-4  
Senghor, President  
Leopold, 16, 30, 32, 34,  
50, 55, 74, 107  
Settlement Study Centre  
(Rehovot), 6, 67, 97  
Shagari, President Shehu,  
97, 106, 132, 164-5  
Shahal, Moshe, 166  
Shamir, Yitzhak, 113,  
115, 117, 121, 123,  
126-7, 134, 136-7, 138,  
166, 169, 178, 182  
Sharon, Ariel, 115-6, 118,  
120, 123, 131, 159  
Shikuku, Martin, 79  
Sidqi, Ahmad, 86  
Sierra Leone, 2, 5, 11, 37,  
47  
Sihanouk (Prince), 35  
Six Day War, 26-32, 39,  
49, 53, 56, 149, 157  
Smart, Dr. John Karefa, 25  
Soglo, General, 7  
Solel Boneh (Construction  
Company), 11, 70, 94-5  
Somalia, 2  
South Africa  
see Israel (Israel and  
South Africa)  
South African Iron and  
Steel Corporation  
(ISCOR), 155

- South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO), 159
- Special Fund for Africa (SAFA), 101, 103
- Stevens, President Siaka, 105
- Straits of Bab el Mandeb, 8
- Straits of Tiran, 26
- Sudan, 9, 48
- Swaziland, 38
- Tahal (water engineering company), 70
- Tamir, General Avraham, 122
- Tamman Group, 124
- Tanzania, 5, 7, 16-7, 37, 47 and Six Day War, 27 restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 97 and see Nyerere, Julius
- Telli, M. Diallo, 28
- 'Ten Wise Men', 30-3
- Territorial integrity, importance of to African states, 50-2 and see Six Day War, Yom Kippur War
- Tettegah, John, 3
- Tiemele, Amoakon Edgampan, 98
- Timor, Rahamin, 114
- Tito, President, 35
- Togo, 5 breaks with Israel, 35, 37 restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 97, 136, 140
- Togolese People's Assembly (RPT), 136
- Tolbert, President William, 73-4, 89, 99, 107
- Tombalbaye, President Francoise, 22, 36, 45
- Traore, Diarra, 131
- Uganda, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 37, 45 and Israeli military training, 9 breaks with Israel, 33, 37 U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, 137 U.N. Security Council Resolution 338, 137
- Upper Volta, 3, 5, 7, 37 condemns Israeli's relations with South Africa, 53
- U. Thant, 30
- Venda, 161
- Volcani Institute for Agricultural Research, 6
- Vorster, John, 106, 150, 151-2, 153, 157, 160, 161, 163
- Wabuge, Wafule, 86
- Waehuku, Jaja, 98
- Weizmann, Ezer, 160
- Wilson, David, 77
- Wolpe, Howard, 138
- Yameogo, President Maurice, 53, 148
- Yitshak Ben Levi, 3
- Yom Kippur War, 35, 43, 45, 47-8, 49-50, 51, 52-3, 56-7, 64, 71, 80, 150, 157, 177 African states sever relations, 36-9
- Young, Andrew, 99
- Zaire, 3, 11 breaks with Israel, 35, 37 supports Egypt, 50 restores diplomatic relations with Israel, 117-26, 140 and see Mobuto, President
- Zambia, 3, 29, 37 and see Kaunda, President Kenneth
- Zelniker, Shimon, 167
- Zionism as racism, 76-8, 150, 151, 178